DC COMICS™

BATMAN™ ILLUSTRATED BY NEAL ADAMS

BATMAN ILLUSTRATED BY **NEAL ADAMS**

3 DC Comics New York, New York

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BATMAN ILLUSTRATED BY NEAL ADAMS
VOLUME THREE

Published by DC Comics.
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Originally published in single magazine form in BATMAN 232, 234-241, 243-246, 251, 255; BATMAN ANNUAL 14; BATMAN BLACK & WHITE 4; THE BRAVE AND THE BOLD 99; DETECTIVE COMICS 412-422, 439, 600; HEROES AGAINST HUNGER; LIMITED COLLECTOR'S EDITION C-25, C-51, C-59; ROBIN 1; SAGA OF RA'S AL GHUL 4; WORLD'S FINEST 211, 244-246, 258. Copyright © 1971, 1972, 1973, 1974, 1975, 1976, 1977, 1978, 1979, 1986, 1988, 1989, 1990, 1991, DC Comics.
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DC Comics
1700 Broadway
New York, NY 10019
A Warner Bros. Entertainment Company.

Cover illustration by Neal Adams.
Interior color by Continuity Associates,
Sno-Cone, and Jamison Services.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

5 Foreword by **Neal Adams**

12 Introduction by **Denny O'Neil**

17 BATMAN #232
June 1971
"Daughter of the Demon"
Cover: Neal Adams
Writer: Denny O'Neil
Pencils: Neal Adams
Inks: Dick Giordano

40 DETECTIVE COMICS #412 Cover
June 1971
Pencils and inks: Neal Adams

41 DETECTIVE COMICS #413 Cover
July 1971
Pencils and inks: Neal Adams

42 BATMAN #234
August 1971
"Half an Evil"
Cover: Neal Adams
Writer: Denny O'Neil
Pencils: Neal Adams
Inks: Dick Giordano

58 DETECTIVE COMICS #414 Cover
August 1971
Pencils and inks: Neal Adams

59 BATMAN #235 Cover
September 1971
Pencils and inks: Neal Adams

60 DETECTIVE COMICS #415 Cover
September 1971
Pencils and inks: Neal Adams

61 DETECTIVE COMICS #416 Cover
October 1971
Pencils and inks: Neal Adams

62 BATMAN #236 Cover
November 1971
Pencils and inks: Neal Adams

63 DETECTIVE COMICS #417 Cover
November 1971
Pencils and inks: Neal Adams

64 BATMAN #237
December 1971
"Night of the Reaper"
Cover: Neal Adams
Writer: Denny O'Neil
Art: Neal Adams & Dick Giordano
Letterer: John Costanza

90 DETECTIVE COMICS #418 Cover
December 1971
Pencils and inks: Neal Adams

91 THE BRAVE & THE BOLD #99 Cover
December 1971
Pencils and inks: Neal Adams

92 BATMAN #238 Cover
January 1972
Pencils and inks: Neal Adams

94 DETECTIVE COMICS #419 Cover
January 1972
Pencils and inks: Neal Adams

95 BATMAN #239 Cover
February 1972
Pencils and inks: Neal Adams

96 DETECTIVE COMICS #420 Cover
February 1972
Pencils and inks: Neal Adams

97 BATMAN #240 cover
March 1972
Pencils and inks: Neal Adams

98 DETECTIVE COMICS #421 Cover
March 1972
Pencils and inks: Neal Adams

99 DETECTIVE COMICS #422 Cover
April 1972
Pencils and inks: Neal Adams

100 BATMAN #241 Cover
May 1972
Pencils and inks: Neal Adams

101 WORLD'S FINEST COMICS #211 Cover
May 1972
Pencils and inks: Neal Adams

102 BATMAN #243
August 1972
"The Lazarus Pit!"
Cover: Neal Adams
Writer: Denny O'Neil
Art: Neal Adams & Dick Giordano
Letterer: John Costanza

127 BATMAN #244
September 1972
"The Demon Lives Again!"
Cover: Neal Adams
Writer: Denny O'Neil
Art: Neal Adams & Dick Giordano
Letterer: John Costanza

144 BATMAN #245
October 1972
"The Bruce Wayne Murder Case!"
Cover: Neal Adams
Writer: Denny O'Neil
Art: Neal Adams & Dick Giordano
Letterer: John Costanza

160 BATMAN #246 Cover
October 1972
Pencils and inks: Neal Adams

161 BATMAN #251
September 1973
"The Joker's Five-Way Revenge!"
Cover: Neal Adams
Writer: Denny O'Neil
Art: Neal Adams
Letterer: Alan Kupperberg

185 DETECTIVE COMICS #439 Cover
February-March 1974
Pencils and inks: Neal Adams

186 BATMAN #255
March-April 1974
"Moon of the Wolf"
Cover: Neal Adams
Writer: Len Wein
Art: Neal Adams & Dick Giordano

207 LIMITED COLLECTOR'S EDITION C-25, pinup
Pencils and inks: Neal Adams

208 POWER RECORDS PR-27
"Stacked Cards"
1975
Story, pencils and inks: Neal Adams

229 POWER RECORDS PR-30
"Robin Meets Man-Bat"
1976
Story: Neal Adams & Frank Robbins
Art: Neal Adams & Dick Giordano

250 POWER RECORDS house ad
1976
Pencils and inks: Neal Adams

251 WORLD'S FINEST COMICS #244 Cover
April-May 1977
Pencils and inks: Neal Adams

252 WORLD'S FINEST COMICS #245 Cover
June-July 1977
Pencils and inks: Neal Adams

253 WORLD'S FINEST COMICS #246 Cover
August-September 1977
Pencils and inks: Neal Adams

254 LIMITED COLLECTOR'S EDITION C-51 Cover
August 1977
Pencils and inks: Neal Adams

256 LIMITED COLLECTOR'S EDITION C-59 Cover
July 1978
Pencils and inks: Neal Adams

257 WORLD'S FINEST COMICS #258 Cover
August-September 1979
Pencils and inks: Neal Adams

258 HEROES AGAINST HUNGER Cover
1986
Pencils and inks: Neal Adams

259 DETECTIVE COMICS #600 pinup
May 1989
Pencils and inks: Neal Adams

260 SAGA OF RA'S AL GHUL #4 Cover
April 1988
Pencils and inks: Neal Adams

262 BATMAN ANNUAL #14 Cover
1990
Pencils and inks: Neal Adams

263 ROBIN #1 pinup
November 1991
Pencils and inks: Neal Adams

264 BATMAN BLACK AND WHITE #4 pinup
September 1996
Pencils and inks: Neal Adams

265 NEAL ADAMS SKETCHBOOK

279 Biographies

NEAL ADAMS FOREWORD

With this volume I can say I hit a certain stride on the Batman stories. And I can't exactly tell you how it happened.

Denny's writing, for one, had improved, and Dick Giordano and I had come to a reasonable understanding. And I was able to tailor the work to him. Of course I always felt more comfortable inking myself, but Dick bent himself into the tool I needed in order to move forward (thank you, Dick).

I had earned enough of Denny's trust to let him focus on the story and not to worry if I "got it." His work soared (thank you, Denny).

Not that I hadn't pushed the borders in earlier stories, but even more I pushed myself into experimenting. Then the magic moments came. Batman saying "boo" to the startled suit; the shark teeth surrounding the Joker; Packy White, the old boxer; Ra's; that little shot of Batman sitting cross-legged, antidote on the lips, bare chested; that kiss with Talia (copied by dozens) and on and on.

Even now I read this stuff like a fan and I search to find how come this artist and this character, Batman, fit each other like a glove.

Of course I

Of course I know the answer, and for the wink of an eye I'll tell it to you.

You up for it?

* * *

I am Batman!

Heh, well, not literally.

I relate to Batman in so many ways.

Batman was rich. I was poor.

Batman was not a super-hero, nor, of course, am I. He wasn't bitten by a radioactive spider. He had no superpowers (ditto, or should I say Ditko...?). He earned every bit of what he had, fired by an iron resolve. Well, as to that:

I was not an artist. I had an affinity, a joy to draw, but others clearly had more talent, more facility, knowledge; the list goes on. For me it was like pulling teeth. Every step was torturous, because I needed to know why, and how, and if, and where... if I couldn't understand it totally, I couldn't put it down on paper.

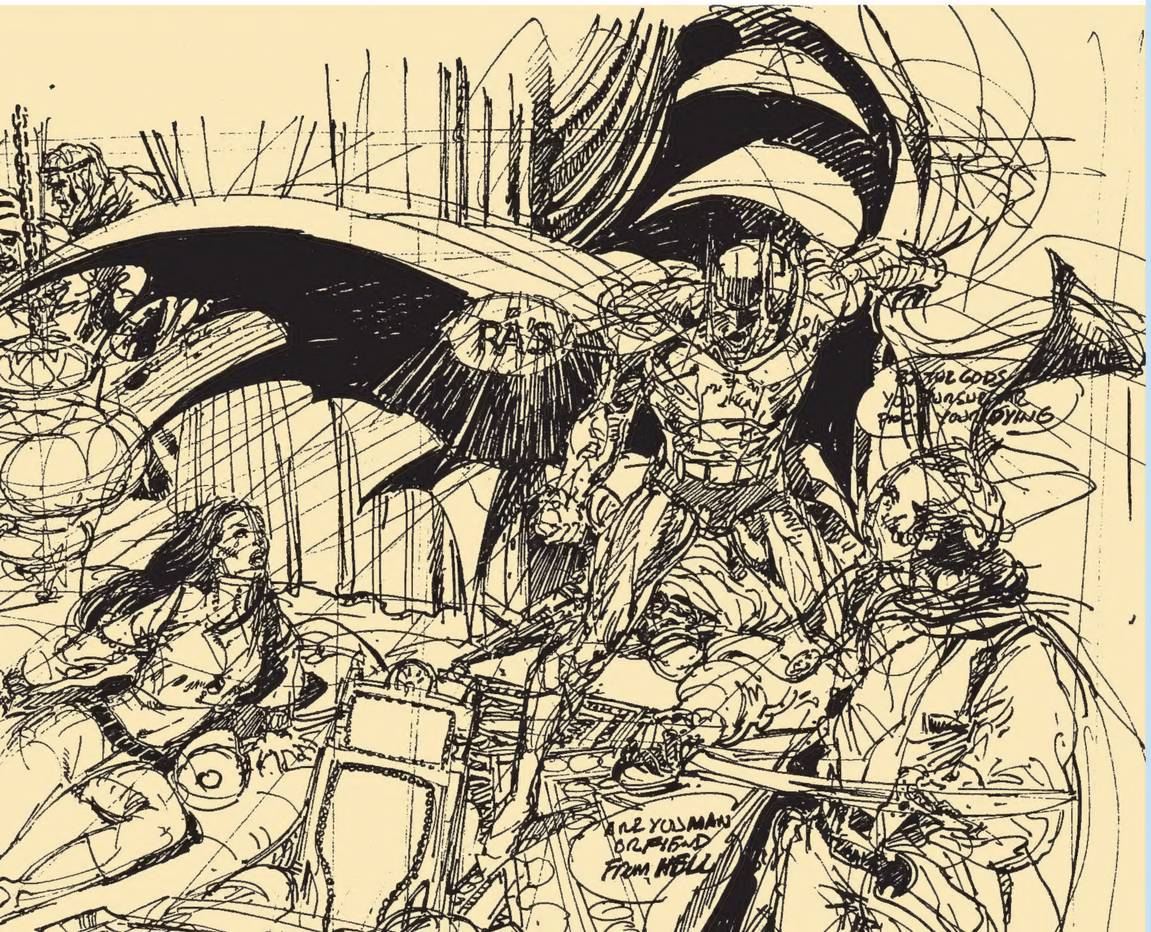
I was tremblingly shy. I was a freckle-faced, four-eyed kid who drew. Did I say fat? Well, fattish, on and off. Chunky. I was poor. Deadly poor. So I disguised myself as someone who was not poor. "Hey Neal, how can you take the cold in that light jacket?"

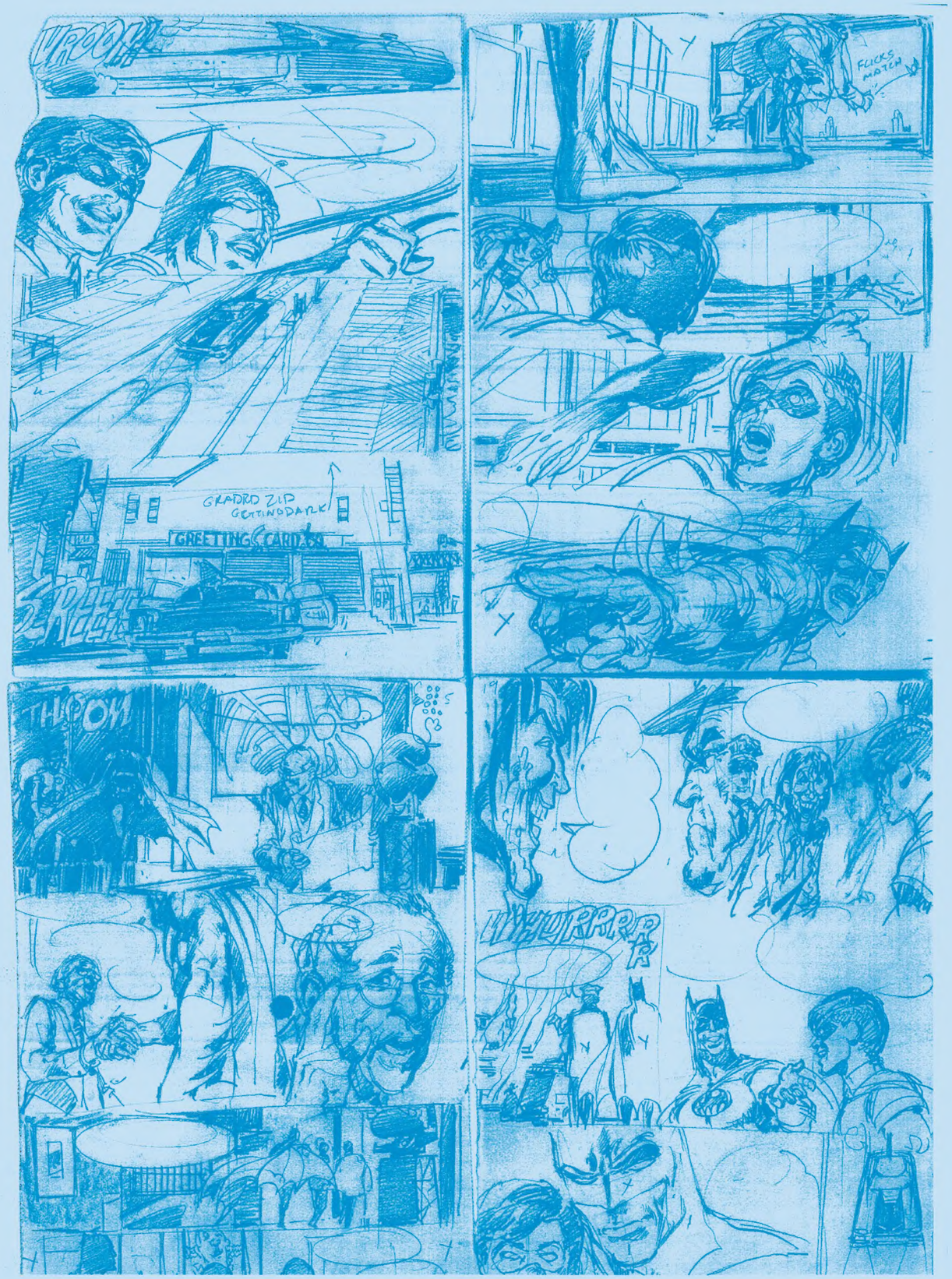
"I don't feel a thing. I'm comfortable like this. I'm a polar bear, hey."

I knew my mom couldn't afford the dentist for me, so I forged a dental note for school. The note was easy, but I hand-lettered the type of the fake dentist at the top of the note pad. No one knew I was poor. It was a perfect disguise.

I wasn't very strong, so I found ways to work out with furniture and lumber. It was the 1950s in the worst days of the gang wars in the worst neighborhood in Brooklyn. Coney Island. I disguised myself to everyone. To the Jewish kids I was Jewish. To the Italian and Irish kids I was unafraid, and better yet, I learned to play a killer game of handball. Handball in the fifties, in Brooklyn, was a tough, independent guy's game.

To the gangs I was a broad-shouldered four-eyed geek who stood up for the Jewish kids and the smaller kids, and I wasn't worth taking down, maybe





Left: Neal's original cover layout for THE SAGA OF RA'S AL GHUL #4, the only issue of the miniseries for which he provided new art.
Above: Neal's thumbnail layouts for one of the two commercial stories collected in this volume.

because I drew — kids who draw get points off. Painting eagles on the back of a black leather jacket for a gang chief worked for about a year.

To keep myself fit I bench-pressed benches and preacher-curled preachers...no...kidding. I curled chairs and whatever I could find. I envied Bruce Wayne his gym, and I dreamed of working out in Gold's Gym in California where all the muscle guys were in those black and white bodybuilding magazines that I traded comic books for.

In art high school I studied everything about art that I could, no matter what. I was like a sponge.

I had surrendered the idea of going to Brooklyn Tech and studying science, my first love. No one knew.

I studied seriously everything they threw at me, but at home and on weekends I drew comic book pages.

Not in school. Why? Because "the comic book business was dead." There were comic books but not up-and-coming comic book artists. In fact there is no one in the comic book business that is within five to seven years my age on either side.

So who was I, this idiot, turning out page after page of awful comic book art, without enough money to buy a coat or go to a dentist to get fillings for his teeth, but willing to dedicate every waking hour to drawing comic book pages, better with each story, aiming at a career that literally didn't exist. My secret life, training to become... Batman.

No, a more impossible thing. A thing I couldn't be. A comic book artist in 1959. Ssssstupid.

Paper? I drew on both sides of the pages. When I ran out, I used the oaktag that they put between egg crates. Back of the supermarket I went through the oak tag in the garbage to find one or two unmarked pieces.

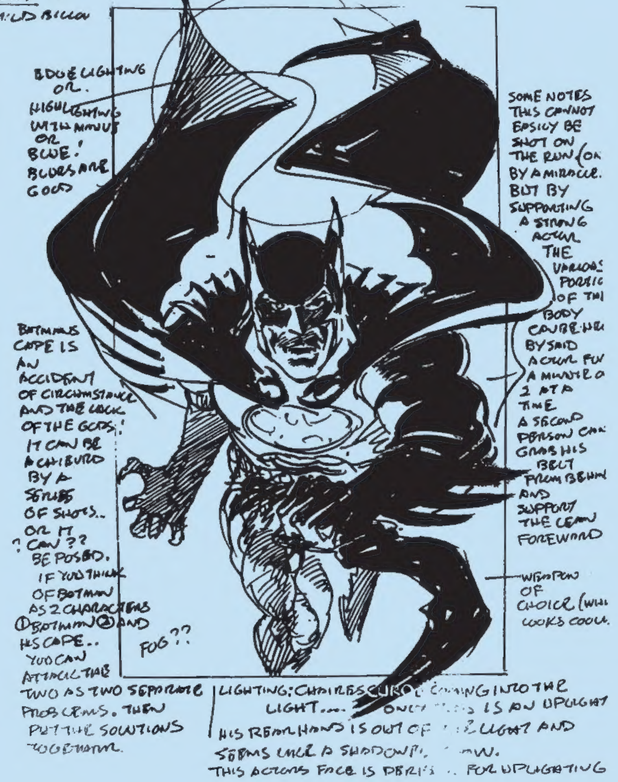
Coming home from school, I stopped into a vest pocket library on the corner of Surf and Mermaid to read and devour science books for an hour every day. Then I went home to draw.

At the end of my 11th year in school I brought 110 original comic book pages to my teacher, Mr. Allen, when the assignment was to have 10 assigned pieces. Of course I had the 10 assigned pieces and a hundred other pages. He gave me a B+ for my portfolio.

I asked him why not an A. I had done 10 times as much as anyone in the class. I felt I deserved an A.

"I know what you want, Mister Adams, and I told you it was impossible. Why should *I* make it any easier for you?"

His answer hurt me to the core because of the respect I had for him.



Neal was asked to draw images of Batman and Mr. Freeze as part of the Licensing Department's style guide in support of the feature *Batman and Robin*. He had previously done the same with *Batman Forever* as seen on the opposite page. These are some of his rough designs.

I might have argued, except this was Mr. Allen. Mr. Allen had been a comic strip artist. Short, well manicured, steel-rimmed glasses, ramrod straight and tough. In his career he was an assistant on a popular comic strip. When the original artist died, he was in contention to do the comic strip but "they" didn't want him to do the strip. They tried others but he won out through skill and ability. He had done the impossible.

Why impossible? Well, he did it in 1948, in America, and Mr. Allen was black. Dark-skinned, and black.

Today this probably doesn't sound like a big deal to you; after all, African American people achieve fame nearly as easily as everyone else in America these days. No, not then in America, *not* in 1948, or '58 when this happened. Ask your father if it was a big deal back then.

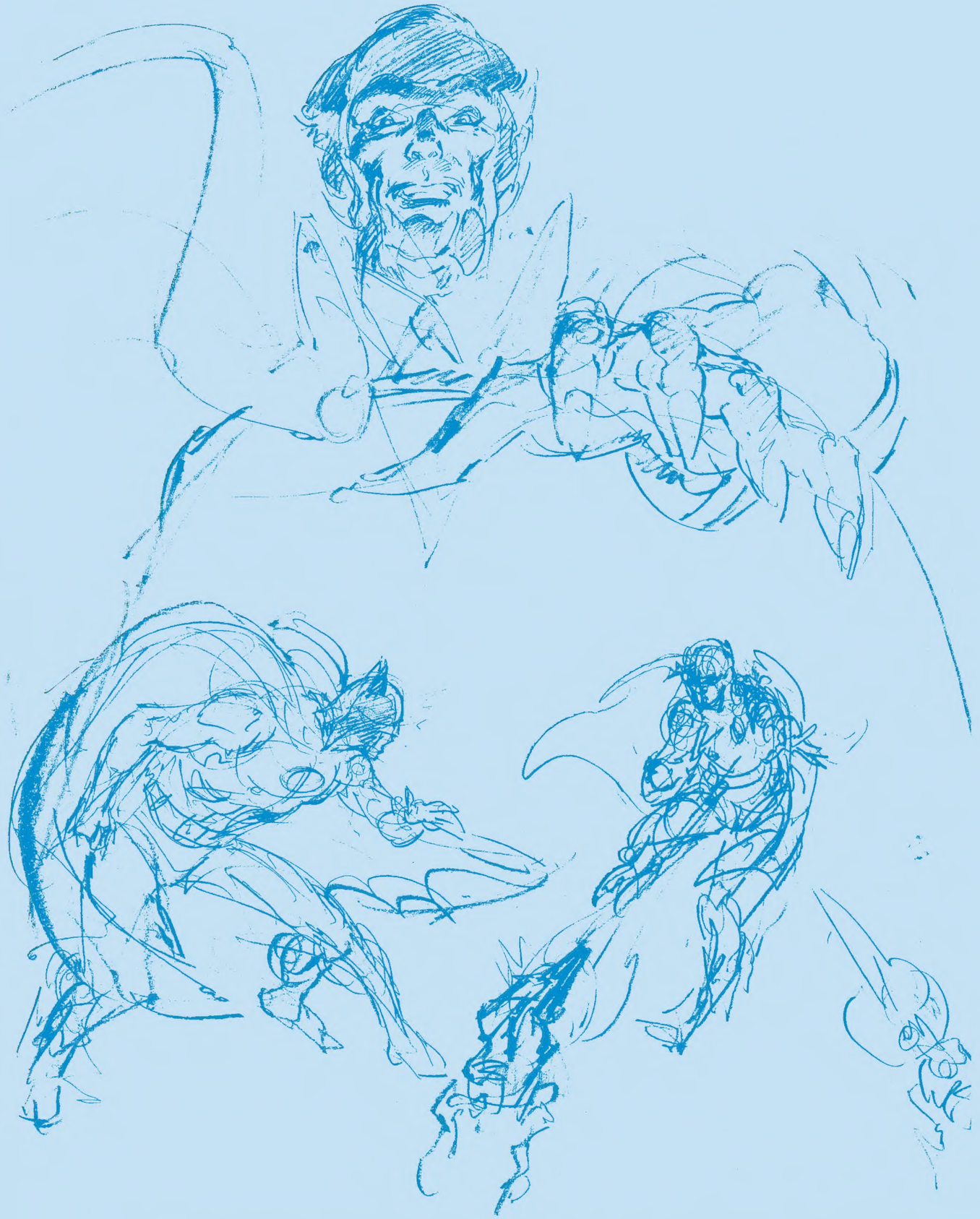
They never printed his picture. He didn't belong to the cartoonist society. I as a total fan had never heard of any black comic strip artists ever...then. They denied his existence. White people were writing the history books, but they let him do the work.

Mr. Allen did the pure impossible. And he, Mr. Allen, gave me a B+.

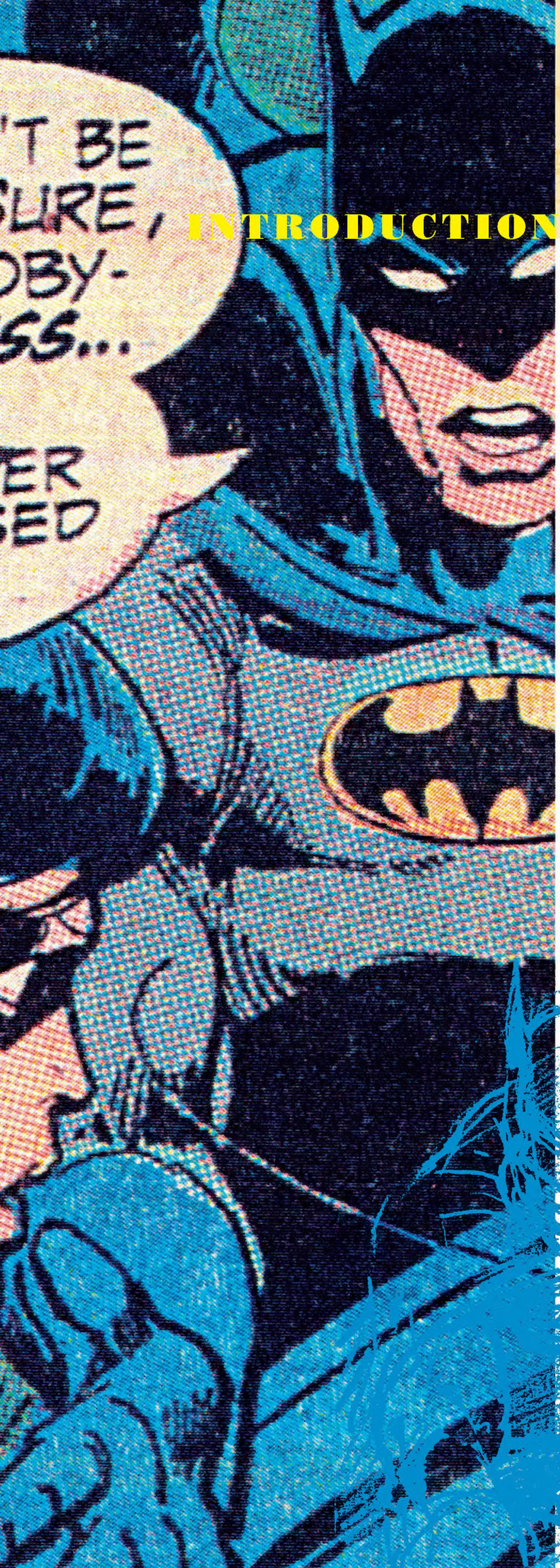
Mr. Allen was Batman.

So am I. It's a lot to live up to.

— Neal Adams
April 5, 2003
New York City



Opposite: These pencils are for a cover sketch produced in the 1980s but never used. Above: Neal's first cover rough for the classic BATMAN #232 cover, introducing Ra's al Ghul.



INTRODUCTION

DENNY O'NEIL

You ask what it was like to work with Neal Adams and I smile, shrug, tilt my head: *I don't know*, I tell you apologetically. Although Neal and I collaborated on dozens of stories, we never really *worked together*. Close collaborations are not unheard-of in the making of comic books: apparently, Bill Finger and Bob Kane talked while they were creating Batman, and I've heard that William Moulton Marston looked over Harry Peter's shoulder as Peter was doing the first Wonder Woman drawings, to cite two examples of writers and artists *working together*. But Neal and I did our separate jobs, him drawing, me scripting, and our labors were united by Julie Schwartz's editorial alchemy into a single narrative.

Not that Neal and I weren't friendly, nor that we never saw each other. We'd meet at parties, or in the corridors of DC Comics, and chat and be nice to each other. But when the stories in this collection were being done, comic book publishing was still pretty much a white-shirt-and-tie kind of business — for many of its practitioners, a job more than a money-earning passion

and so not a venue for socializing. There was some sense of camaraderie among the artists, but we writers were, largely, a solitary bunch. I never felt I belonged to a comic book community, not back then; I was just a guy who occasionally met and partied with the artists who rendered my scripts into graphics, Neal Adams among them. The work was done like this: I got an assignment from Mr. Schwartz and went home and wrote and about a week later returned and gave Mr. Schwartz a manuscript. Then Mr. Schwartz gave the manuscript to Neal and…well, that initiated a fairly complex process involving not only Neal but a cadre of inkers and letterers and printers and sundry other artisans. The end result, though, was that a few months later I held a pulpy delight: a story, which, though printed on cheap paper, was a thing of splendor.

Well, okay, the comics I wrote were not always things of splendor. To be starkly honest, I sometimes thought that the artists didn't exactly…*do justice* to the story. But the first few times I saw an Adams rendering of one of my scripts, I was a happy writer indeed. I didn't exactly know *why* his stuff seemed so good, not then, but I certainly liked looking at it. Today, decades later, when both Neal and I have somehow, when no one was watching, morphed from young Turks into doddering elder statesmen, I can *still* like looking at it.

But now, I can hazard an opinion or two as to why the Adams work represented in this collection was so innovative in the early seventies and why it remains a pleasure to behold. There are a number of reasons, I think. The first is that Neal was and is prodigiously talented. He has that thing, which is probably genetic, that allows him to see in a special way and to interpret what he sees on paper — a kind of hand-eye-brain connection, maybe. And it makes no difference whether what he's seeing is a physical object in front of him or exists only in his imagination; the process is, apparently, the same.

But that *talent* is common among artists — could they even *be* artists without it? It doesn't, by itself, explain the graphic excellence of these stories. Another factor is that when Neal did this work he had been a professional long enough to know his trade. He had a full toolbox and he was adept at using everything in it. Yet he was still a very young man, full of a young man's energy and enthusiasm. So his work here benefits from both the skill of a seasoned professional and the passion of a beginner.

The result of all that — Neal's talent, skill and enthusiasm — is what culturati call "magic realism." Rather than struggle to explain the concept to you (and maybe have to work a bit hard) I'll take the lazy man's way and quote someone else's definition, that of the *Random House Unabridged Dictionary:* "a style of painting and literature in which fantastic or imaginary and often unsettling images or events are depicted in a sharply detailed, realistic manner." I'm pretty sure Neal wasn't acquainted with the term *magic realism*, which originally referred to German expressionism, when we were doing Batman; I had certainly never heard of it. But magic realism is exactly what he was producing. Look at the images: they are not the fancies of a cartoonist but the depictions of a realist. Although Neal was working in a cartoonists' medium, his forebears were not cartoonists but illustrators, men who, in previous centuries, filled the world's books and magazines and museum walls with paintings that might be mistaken for color photographs if you squinted a bit. Neal is, in his marrow, a realistic illustrator who's influenced by cartooning, not a cartoonist who has some illustrator's moves. That esoteric, but highly developed sensibility is the most important thing he brought to comic book superheroes.

"If superheroes really existed," he once told me, "they'd look like I draw them." Yes. Precisely.

Batman was a near-perfect vehicle for

Neal's emergent, magically realistic approach to comics narrative. There isn't a great stretch between Batman's world and ours; he is the most "realistic" of the great superheroes. (Which doesn't mean I believe that he could actually exist in our reality; that *realistic* merits the quotation marks I put around it.) To be blunt: the guy isn't very super. He didn't gain his powers by being lightning-struck, nor bathing in chemicals, nor by dint of being born on another planet, nor by the intervention of extraterrestrials or gods. To paraphrase an old commercial, he got them the old-fashioned way — he *earned* them. And, really, they aren't powers (or at least not superpowers). He can merely run, jump, swim, fight and think better than anyone else, anywhere, ever. But he wasn't bequeathed those abilities; he sweated for them. And he had a good reason, if not a particularly healthy one, for all that autodidactic effort: he'd seen his parents murdered and this motivated him to devote his life to crime-fighting. In short, Batman's roots are in real life, not some fantasy universe, and that, I submit, made him the ideal vehicle for the kind of work Neal wanted to do.

You doubt it? Turn to the stories. In matters such as this, the stories are always the final arbiter.

Of course, all this is only my opinion. I haven't discussed it with Neal, and I'm not sure he'd agree with all of it. The truth is, there's a lot Neal and I disagree about. In fact, for a while, there was a rumor going around that Neal and I were feuding. Not true. I like and admire him and consider him a friend, and I'm certainly grateful to him. I just don't agree with him much.

Except in the matter of comic books. There, on some level, we are in accord. You could say, our souls resonate as one. (I'd rather you didn't, but you could.) What *I'd* say is, our collaborations were successful, satisfying and occasionally even joyful and I'm glad they exist.

Now read the stories.

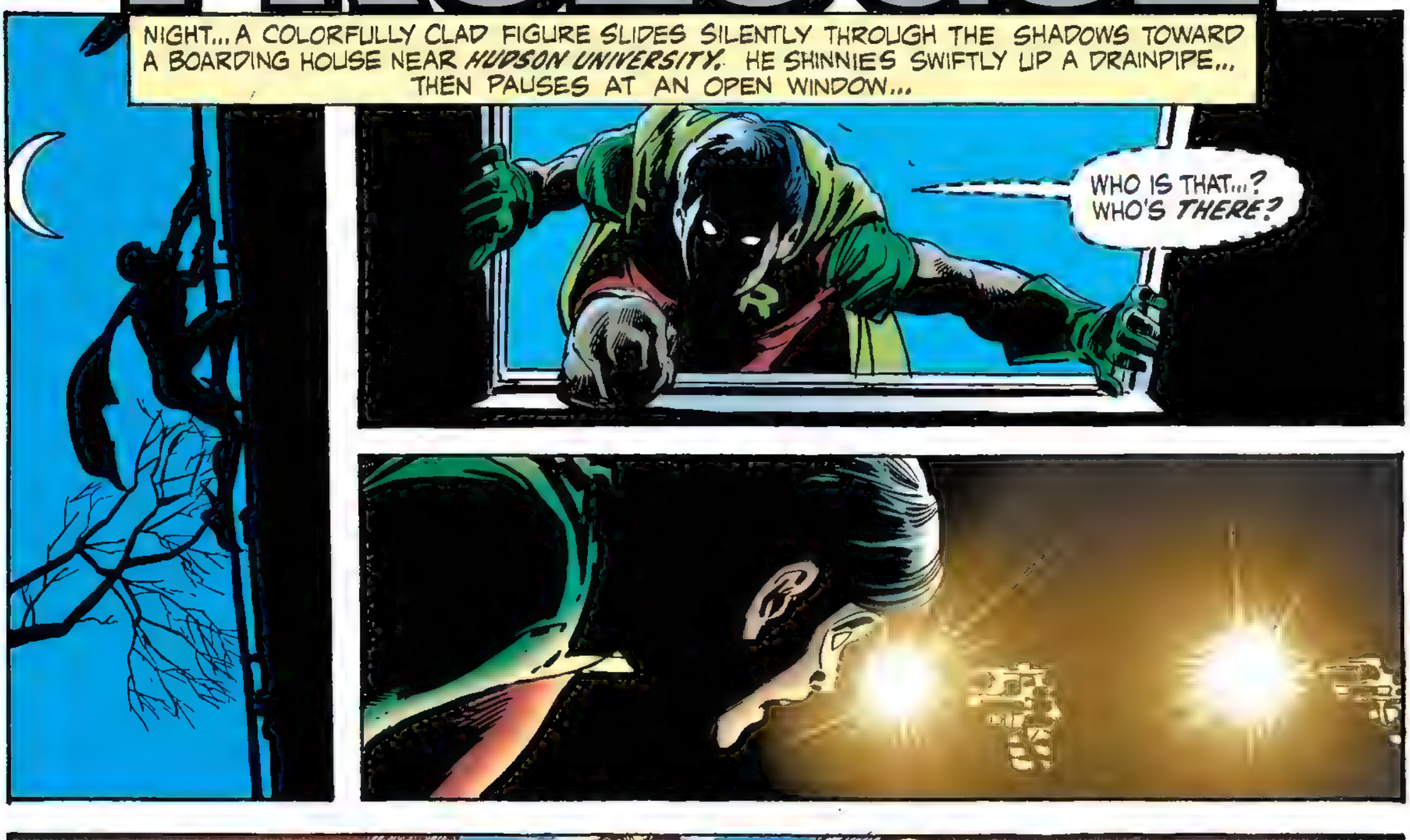
— Dennis O'Neil
March, 2004

Left: Neal's pencil layout for the tabloid reprint collection of the initial Ra's al Ghul cycle.
Above: Pencil design for DC's licensing department.

DC BATMAN
15¢
BATMAN
WITH ROBIN THE TEEN WONDER
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
WHEN I DECIDE ROBIN MUST DIE--
--HE DIES!
A TALE TO HAUNT YOU FOREVER--
"DAUGHTER of the DEMON!"

PROLOGUE

NIGHT... A COLORFULLY CLAD FIGURE SLIDES SILENTLY THROUGH THE SHADOWS TOWARD A BOARDING HOUSE NEAR *HUDSON UNIVERSITY.* HE SHINNIES SWIFTLY UP A DRAINPIPE... THEN PAUSES AT AN OPEN WINDOW...



HOURS LATER, AT THE LAVISH *GOTHAM CITY* PENTHOUSE OF MILLIONAIRE BRUCE WAYNE...

NO *GOOD!* NO ONE AT THE UNIVERSITY'S SEEN DICK FOR THE PAST COUPLE OF DAYS -- HE'S *VANISHED*.., AND THAT *HAS* TO MEAN *TROUBLE!*

BEGGING YOUR PARDON, MASTER BRUCE --

A MESSENGER JUST LEFT THIS MISSIVE WITH THE DOORMAN!

YOUNG MASTER DICK--!?

YES, ALFRED... AS I FEARED! HE'S A CAPTIVE... OR *WORSE!*

Dear Batman We have Robin! save him if You can!

STORY BY: DENNY O'NEIL

THE DREAD *BATMAN* IS NO STRANGER TO PERIL... FOR HE HAS PITTED HIS STRENGTH, COURAGE, AND INTELLIGENCE AGAINST THE DEADLIEST OF FOES, THE MOST INGENIOUS OF CRIMINALS... YET NO QUEST HAS EVER TAKEN HIM CLOSER TO DEATH THAN HIS SEARCH FOR THE--

DAUGHTER OF THE DEMON

ART BY: NEAL ADAMS & DICK GIORDANO
EDITED BY: JULIUS SCHWARTZ

2

CANCEL ALL MY APPOINTMENTS, ALFRED!

I'M *UN-AVAILABLE* TO *EVERY-ONE!*

BRUCE WAYNE WILL HAVE TO *VACATION* IF *THE BATMAN* IS TO FIND HIS WARD!

MAY I ASK, SIR, WHERE YOU ARE BOUND *FIRST?*

I WANT TO RUN A *FULL ANALYSIS* ON THE NOTE AND PHOTO! FOR THAT, I'LL NEED THE GEAR IN THE *BATCAVE!*

A HASTY TRIP TO AN ESTATE IN THE SUBURBS... AND THEN...

SEEING MY ANCESTRAL HOME *SO DARK*... AS CLOSED AS A *VAULT*-- GIVES ME A NASTY CHILL!

PERHAPS DICK AND I SHOULD NEVER HAVE *LEFT* THE OLD PLACE--

BUT TIMES CHANGE AND PEOPLE MUST CHANGE WITH THEM!

THE ORIGINAL CONCEALED ENTRANCE TO THE CAVE STILL WORKS *PERFECTLY!* I BUILT IT TO *LAST*...

...AS I BUILT *EVERYTHING*... BEGINNING WITH THE BEST PARTS AVAILABLE AND ENDING WITH PLENTY OF *SWEAT!*

WELCOME *HOME*, *BRUCE WAYNE*-- OR SHALL I ADDRESS YOU AS *THE BATMAN?*

3

AT THE SOUND OF AN ICY, PENETRATING VOICE, THE CAPED MAN WHIRLS, AND--

WHO *ARE* YOU? HOW'D YOU GET IN HERE...?

TO ANSWER YOUR QUESTION, I AM PRESENTLY KNOWN AS *RÃS AL GHÜL!* YOU SHALL BE SEEING *MUCH* OF ME!

TO ANSWER YOUR *SECOND* QUERY...IT WAS A SIMPLE MATTER OF *DEDUCTION* AND *RESEARCH!* I REASONED THAT *THE BATMAN* HAD TO BE *WEALTHY*...

...AND THAT HE NEEDED CERTAIN KINDS OF EQUIPMENT; THEREFORE, I MERELY HAD MY ORGANIZATION INVESTIGATE...

...AND YOU FOUND THAT *BRUCE WAYNE* ALONE BOUGHT WHAT *THE BATMAN* HAD TO HAVE, RIGHT? OKAY... THAT'S A HOLE I'LL *PLUG!*

I'M SURPRISED SOMEONE DIDN'T THINK OF IT *YEARS* AGO! NOW, I HAVE A *THIRD* QUESTION... THE *BIG* ONE...

WHAT DO YOU WANT?

I WANT...*NEED*... YOUR *HELP!* MY CHILD HAS BEEN *ABDUCTED!* I RECEIVED THIS PHOTOGRAPH BY *MESSENGER!*

THAT'S *TALIA!*--SHE'S YOUR DAUGHTER?*

Dear Rã's Al Ghül we have your daughter, save her if you can.

4

** THE BATMAN SAVED TALIA'S LIFE IN "INTO THE DEN OF THE DEATH-DEALERS" (DETECTIVE COMICS #411; MAY 1971) AND SHE RETURNED THE COMPLIMENT BY SLAYING THE MURDEROUS DR. DARRK!... EDITOR*

APPARENTLY THE GIRL WAS TAKEN BY THE SAME PERSON WHO HAS MY *WARD!* WE HAVE A *MUTUAL* PROBLEM--

TALIA SPOKE *HIGHLY* OF YOUR ABILITIES AS A *DETECTIVE!* I TRUST HER JUDGMENT WITHOUT *RESERVATION*--

IF *ANYONE* CAN SEEK HER OUT... IT IS *THE BATMAN!*

LET'S HOPE YOU'RE *BOTH* CORRECT! FOR OPENERS, I'LL EXAMINE THE PICTURES UNDER A MICROSCOPIC SPECTROGRAPH!

THERE MAY BE TRACES OF *DUST* THAT CAN GIVE US A CLUE!

FOR THE BETTER PART OF AN HOUR THE *WORLD'S GREATEST DETECTIVE* BENDS TO HIS TASK! THEN--

YES...UNMISTAKABLE BITS OF A CERTAIN *HERB*... ONE USED IN CEREMONIES OF A FAR EASTERN CULT OF *KILLERS!*

THEY'RE CALLED THE *BROTHERHOOD OF THE DEMON!* AND I RECALL THAT THEY'RE CURRENTLY LOCATED IN *CALCUTTA!*

WE SHALL PROCEED TO *INDIA IMMEDIATELY!*

YOU *SMILE, BATMAN!* YOU HAVE MADE A *DISCOVERY?*

I THINK SO...

I HAVE AN AIRCRAFT WAITING NEARBY--

INFIDEL! MY LORD *AL GHUL* LEAVES THE CHAMBER *FIRST!*

UNN...OKAY, FRIEND! YOU'VE MADE YOUR POINT!

PRAY FORGIVE MY GUARD *UBU!* HE IS TRAINED TO MY *COMPLETE* SERVICE... AND A TRIFLE *OVERZEALOUS!*

HE'S THAT, ALL RIGHT... AND STRONG, TOO!

5

SOON, THE ODDLY MIXED TRIO IS WINGING OVER AN OCEAN...

AND INSIDE THE LUXURIOUS JET...

YOUR *WARD* AND MY DAUGHTER ARE IN MORTAL DANGER! INDEED, *BATMAN*, THEY MAY *ALREADY* BE DEAD! YET YOU SHOW NO SIGNS OF *AGITATION*--

NOR DO YOU EXHIBIT ANY *CURIOSITY* CONCERNING MY HUMBLE *SELF*! HAVE YOU NO *FEELINGS*?

PLENTY OF THEM! BUT IT WON'T DO ANY GOOD FOR ME TO ALLOW MY *EMOTIONS* TO GAIN CONTROL...

...NOT WHILE THERE'S A *JOB* AHEAD! FOR YEARS, I'VE TRAINED MYSELF TO CONCENTRATE ON THE THING AT HAND--

LATER, I'LL CRY... IF I MUST!

CRY--? YES, THERE HAVE BEEN TEARS IN MY LIFE--

BEGINNING WITH THAT SUMMER EVENING SO LONG AGO! MY PARENTS AND THE CHILD THAT WAS MYSELF WERE STROLLING HOME FROM A MOVIE, HAPPY, CONTENT--WHEN SUDDENLY--"

I'LL TAKE THAT NECKLACE YOU'RE WEARING, LADY!

LEAVE HER ALONE... *AAGH!*

HELP! POLICE... HELP!

SHUT *UP*, LADY! I SAID... *SHUT UP!*

PLEASE, DON'T--!

"IN A SINGLE, SEARING MOMENT, MY CHILDHOOD WAS GONE, BLASTED BY A CHEAP THUG'S BULLETS, AND I WAS LEFT ALONE IN A WORLD GROWN COLD..."

"I KNEW I WOULD NEVER AGAIN KNOW PEACE! STANDING OVER THE BODIES OF MY MOTHER AND FATHER, I MADE A SILENT VOW..."

"I WOULD AVENGE THEIR MURDERS--I WOULD DEDICATE MY LIFE TO A RELENTLESS WAR AGAINST CRIME..."

"AND SO I DID! HAD I REALIZED THE DIFFICULTY OF THE TASK I'D SET MYSELF, I MIGHT HAVE WAVERED. THERE WERE BRUTALLY LONG HOURS IN THE LABORATORY..."

"AND EQUALLY LONG, EQUALLY BRUTAL HOURS IN THE GYM... TRAINING, DEVELOPING EVERY CONCEIVABLE SORT OF SKILL..."

"I WAS NOT YET OLD ENOUGH TO VOTE...A TOTALLY DEVOTED, ALMOST FANATICAL YOUNG MAN..."

"...CONSUMED WITH A NEED, BUT UNABLE TO FOCUS IT! THEN, ONE NIGHT A *BAT* CHANCED IN MY WINDOW--AND MY FUTURE WAS CLEAR..."

IT'S AN *OMEN!* I SHALL BECOME A *BAT!*

"I FELT CRIMINALS TO BE A COWARDLY, SUPERSTITIOUS LOT..."

"...AND I REASONED THAT MY DISGUISE WOULD STRIKE TERROR IN THEIR HEARTS..."

"SOON, I BECAME FEARED AND HATED... EXACTLY AS I'D HOPED! THEN, AT A PERFORMANCE OF THE CIRCUS, I SAW MY OWN TRAGEDY HORRIBLY REENACTED AS A PAIR OF AERIALISTS PLUNGED TO THEIR DEATHS..."

"...LEAVING A SMALL, FRIGHTENED BOY TO MOURN. I CHILLED WITH THE REALIZATION THAT MINE WAS NOT AN ISOLATED AGONY... NOR EVEN UNIQUE!"

"I LOOKED AT THE WEEPING LAD...AND SAW MYSELF! I PUT A HAND ON HIS SHOULDER, AND IN THAT SECOND, AN UNDERSTANDING WAS FORGED BETWEEN US... AND A COMMON PURPOSE!"

7

"THE DESIRE TO SEE JUSTICE METED OUT TO THOSE WHO DO NOT HOLD LIFE SACRED MIGHT HAVE DIMMED FOR ANOTHER MAN, BUT FOR *THE BATMAN* THERE IS THE ALMOST DAILY REMINDER OF MAN'S INHUMANITY. ONLY THIS TIME IT HAS STRUCK THAT MUCH CLOSER TO MY HEART!"

SOON... *CALCUTTA!* CITY OF A THOUSAND MISERIES, A MILLION TEARS! BEHIND EVERY DOOR LURKS A HORROR... BEHIND EVERY SMILE, A KNIFE...

ALMS! ALMS FOR THE LOVE OF *ALLAH*--!

ALMS, GOOD BROTHERS?

NAY, OLD PRIEST ...WE COME TO *TAKE*, NOT *GIVE!*

EMPTY YOUR BEGGING CUP.. OR SUFFER OUR *ANGER!*

SUCH THREATS BODE YOU *ILL!*

SURRENDER--! FOR *MY* ANGER *DWARFS* YOURS!

AIEEE! BENEATH THE HOLY ROBES, A DEVIL FROM *HELL!*--A *BAT-MAN!*

STUPID WAVER OF STICKS! YOUR WEAPON MEANS *NOTHING* TO ME!

IT ONLY INCREASES MY *FURY!*

I WOULD HAVE *INFORMATION* OF YOU! WHERE LURKS THE *BROTHERHOOD OF THE DEMON?*

I *DARE* NOT ANSWER! THE *BROTHERHOOD* WOULD HAVE MY *LIFE!*

FOOL! THINK YOU THAT I WILL *NOT...?* SPEAK *TRUTH...NOW!*

STAY YOUR FIST... *PLEASE!* THE *BROTHERHOOD* HIDES AT THE END OF THE *ALLEY OF WIDOWS!*

WELL *DONE,* DETECTIVE!

IT WAS A LONG SHOT... THAT I'D ATTRACT SOMEONE WHO HAD THE INFORMATION! FORTUNATELY IT PAID *OFF!*

THE *ALLEY OF WIDOWS* IS ON THIS VERY AVENUE!

ONCE *MORE* I WARN YOU, INFIDEL! THE *MASTER* GOES *FIRST!*

EASY, BIG FELLA! I'M NOT TRYING TO BE *PUSHY!*

KINDLY FORGIVE *UBU'S DEVOTION!*

THAT MUST BE IT! AS *NAPOLEON* ONCE REMARKED IN PRIVATE CONVERSATION...WAITING IS THE MEDICINE OF THE *WEAK!*

9

QUIET, ISN'T IT? MAYBE *TOO* QUIET...

SUDDENLY, THERE IS A THROATY *SNARL*, AND A FURRY JUGGERNAUT LEAPS AT ***THE BATMAN***, BARED FANGS GLEAMING, EYES POOLS OF BLOODLUST...

ALMOST WITHOUT THINKING, ***THE BATMAN*** SMASHES HIS ELBOW DEEP INTO THE MOUTH OF THE ENRAGED LEOPARD... LOCKING ITS JAWS OPEN...

AS HE FALLS, ***BATMAN*** SIDESTEPS... AVOIDING THE RAKING HIND CLAWS WHICH SEARCH THE AIR, FAILING TO DISEMBOWEL...

THEN, WITH SPLIT-SECOND TIMING, ***THE BATMAN*** DRIVES HIMSELF IN AND AROUND THE FELINE FURY...

...AND INSIDE THE RANGE OF THE RAKING CLAWS, ***THE BATMAN*** BEGINS TO FORCE HIS ELBOW FORWARD... UNTIL...

SNAP

PANTING, THE CAPED WARRIOR STANDS, AS *RĀ'S AL GHŪL* MURMURS CONGRATULATIONS...

EXCELLENT, DETECTIVE! IS THERE NO *LIMIT* TO YOUR PROWESS?

THAT LEOPARD WAS *TRAINED!*

SOMEONE TAUGHT IT TO ACT AS A *GUARD!* THE QUESTION IS.. WHAT'S WORTH *GUARDING?*

NOTHING IN THE PLACE EXCEPT THAT *DESK*...

AND NOTHING IN THE DESK EXCEPT THIS *MAP!*... A CHART OF THE *HIMALAYAN MOUNTAINS!*

UMMM...THERE'S SOMETHING *INTER-ESTING!*--A FAINT *SCRATCH* ON THE PAPER...

...AS THOUGH SOME-ONE WITH A LONG *FINGERNAIL* TRACED A ROUTE!

I ASSUME YOU CAN FINANCE A *MOUNTAIN EXPEDITION?* IF YOU CAN'T-- I...

OF COURSE! WE'LL BEGIN *IMMEDIATELY!*

OH...LEST *I FORGET!*-- AFTER *YOU!*

MOUNT NANDA DEVI, ONE OF THE MIGHTY HIMALAYAS... RISING FROM THE WASTELANDS BETWEEN INDIA AND TIBET 25,645 FEET INTO THIN, BRUTALLY COLD AIR! TREACHEROUS, SAVAGE TERRAIN THAT ALLOWS ANY WHO DARES IT ONLY ONE MISTAKE...

TO THIS NIGHTMARE OF BLISTERING WIND AND BLINDING SNOW TREK THE BATMAN AND HIS TWO STRANGE COMPANIONS...

IT HASN'T SNOWED FOR SEVERAL DAYS! THE TRAIL IS STILL CLEAR!

YES! THE ABDUCTORS OBVIOUSLY BROUGHT YOUR WARD AND MY DAUGHTER UP THIS WAY!

12

YOU TOO TIRED TO GO ON? WE CAN MAKE CAMP HERE!

NO, DETECTIVE! ALTHOUGH I HAVE NOT *ALL* YOUR SKILLS, I AM YOUR EQUAL IN *STAMINA!*

BUT GIVE ME A MOMENT TO GAZE!

IT IS A BEAUTY TO WHICH MY SOUL RESPONDS... SO STARK, SO PURE...AS UNTAINTED AS MY DESERT HOME!

I AM CURSED WITH A LOVE FOR EMPTINESS... DESOLATION!

TELL ME YOUR LIFE - STORY *LATER*... WHEN THE KIDS ARE *SAFE!*

THESE FOOT-AND-HAND-HOLDS HAVE BEEN HACKED FROM THE ICE *RECENTLY!*

OUR PATH LEADS *UP*... *FAR* UP! WE'LL HAVE TO MOVE *FAST*...REACH THE RIDGE-TOP BEFORE NIGHTFALL!

I'VE HAD SOME *EXPERIENCE* SCALING CLIFFS! I'LL LEAD--UNLESS *UBU* OBJECTS!

I DEFER TO YOUR PROWESS, DETECTIVE--GLADLY!

INCH BY DANGEROUS INCH, THEY ASCEND... ONLY A THIN ROPE BETWEEN THEM AND A QUICK PLUNGE TO DEATH! FINGERS AND FACES GROW NUMB, AND THE BREATH RATTLES HARSHLY IN THEIR THROATS--

13

STILL, THEY FORCE THEMSELVES FARTHER! *THE BATMAN* FINDS HIS PATH SURELY, SWIFTLY...UNAWARE THAT HE IS FRAMED IN A GUNSIGHT!

WITHOUT WARNING, THE BOOM OF A HEAVY CALIBER RIFLE ECHOES THROUGH THE CREVASSES...

KPOW

AGGH!

POW

AL GHŪL'S OUT OF IT! AND I'M A PERFECT *TARGET--!* NO COVER, NO CHANCE TO RUN...

SOON THAT SNIPER WILL FIND THE RANGE-- ZERO IN! BULLETS ARE *ALREADY* COMING CLOSER!

SPANG

UBU'S GOTTEN HIMSELF AND *AL GHŪL* TO THE LEDGE!

THEY'RE *SAFE* FOR THE TIME BEING!

ZING

THAT LEAVES ME FREE TO TAKE MY *INSANE* CHANCE...THE ONLY ONE *AVAILABLE!*

GOT TO GET OUT OF THESE ROPES!

NEXT, I'LL DITCH MY HEAVY PARKA! IT MAY IMPEDE FAST *MOVEMENT*...

...AND AS IT FALLS, IT MAY DISTRACT THE KILLER FOR THE SINGLE MOMENT I NEED--

--TO BRACE MY FEET... AND *LEAP!*

KPOW

ACROSS THE CHILL CHASM HE FLINGS HIMSELF--A FINAL, DESPERATE ATTEMPT TO REACH THE STEEP SLOPE FIFTEEN FEET AWAY...A MURDERER IN FRONT, AND YAWNING DOOM BELOW...!

SMOKE...FROM *COOK FIRES*, NO DOUBT! THAT'S THE PAY-OFF!

NO POINT IN KEEPING THEM IN *SUSPENSE!* THEY'RE ALMOST *INVITING* ME IN...

...AND SINCE I'VE COME HALF-WAY AROUND THE WORLD, I'LL JUST *ACCEPT* THAT INVITATION!

THERE ARE PROBABLY A DOZEN GUNS TRAINED ON ME, BUT NOBODY'S GOING TO SHOOT!

THEY'LL WANT TO WATCH MY *REACTION!*

A *HELICOPTER*... NATURALLY! IT FIGURES THERE'D BE A CHOPPER IN THE AREA!

AND I CAN GUESS WHO THE *PASSENGERS* ARE!*

WUP WUP WUP WUP

*THE BATMAN ACTS AS THOUGH HE HAS THE CASE HACKED! HMMM...

AT LAST... I FACE A PAIR OF *BONA FIDE BROTHERS OF THE DEMON*, PLAYING AT GUARD DUTY!

DISAPPOINTING! THEY LOOK LIKE ANY *OTHER* CREEPS WHO NEED TO PROVE THEIR MANHOOD WITH NOISY STICKS!

HALT, INTRUDER! HALT OR I'LL...

CAN IT, SONNY-BOYS! YOU DON'T *DARE* USE THAT THING... AS WE BOTH *KNOW!*

16

BOLDLY, *THE BATMAN* STRIDES INTO A CHAMBER HEWN FROM ROCK, AND...

BATMAN! GOOD TO SEE *YOU*, FRIEND!

SAME HERE, *ROBIN!*

STOP! YOU CAN'T...

SURE I CAN! *WATCH* ME!

HOW'VE THEY BEEN TREATING YOU, KID?

NOT BAD! CHOW'S *LOUSY*... NICE *ATMOSPHERE*, THOUGH! HAVE ANY HASSLES *GETTING* HERE?

NONE TO COMPLAIN OF! BUT DO ME A FAVOR... NEXT HOODS THAT SNARE YOU, ASK THEM TO STAY IN THE *UNITED STATES!* I *HATE* LONG TRIPS!

ON YOUR *KNEES*, INTRUDER! THE *SUPREME BROTHER* ENTERS!

I'LL GIVE THE KNEELING A *MISS*, IF YOU DON'T MIND--AND EVEN IF YOU *DO!*

IN THE LAST THREE DAYS, I'VE MIXED WITH CUT-THROATS AND A KILLER-LEOPARD...

...I'VE BRUISED MY KNUCKLES ON VARIOUS CHINS, I'VE CLIMBED A MOUNTAIN, AND I'VE DODGED BULLETS...

...SO I DON'T HAVE ANY *PATIENCE* LEFT FOR PHONY RITUALS!

17

IN FACT, I DON'T HAVE ANY PATIENCE LEFT *PERIOD!* YOU'VE BEEN PUTTING ME THROUGH PACES AND YOU THINK I'M TOO *DUMB* TO UNDERSTAND IT!

YOU THINK A MAN WITH MY TRAINING COULDN'T SEE WHAT'S BEEN *HAPPENING?*

FROM THE VERY *BEGINNING,* I SAW THE WHOLE DEAL WAS A *CHARADE!*

RĀ'S AL GHŪL AND HIS OX OF A SERVANT SHOWING RIGHT AFTER *ROBIN* DISAPPEARED... *THAT* WAS A JOKE!

TOO QUICK...TOO BIG A *COINCIDENCE!* *AL GHŪL'S* STORY OF HIS DAUGHTER'S *IDENTICAL* DISAPPEARANCE WOULDN'T HAVE FOOLED A *MORON!*

THEN IN *CALCUTTA...* *UBU* ALWAYS MADE A BIG ROUTINE OF LETTING HIS BOSS GO AHEAD OF ME...

...*EXCEPT* WHEN THERE WAS *DANGER!* CONCLUSION ...*UBU KNEW* THE LEOPARD WAS WAITING!

THE *MAP* WAS THE CLINCHER! I TOLD A LITTLE WHITE LIE... BECAUSE THERE WAS *NO* FINGERNAIL SCRATCH ON THE CHART--

...YET *UBU* AND *AL GHŪL* TOOK ME TO *THIS* MOUNTAIN... THIS, OF THE *THIRTEEN HIMALAYAS!*

I'M *TIRED* OF TALKING! YOU *READY, ROBIN?*

CHECK, *BATMAN!* SHALL WE *BEGIN?*

WITNESS IT--FURY HELD IN RIGID CHECK UNTIL NOW... EXPLODES!
THESE ARE NO BRUTAL BEINGS! THERE IS A PART OF THEIR HEARTS THAT DESPISES VIOLENCE...
...BUT THEY ARE A PRODUCT OF THEIR ERA, EVEN AS ARE YOU! THE HORRORS OF THREE WARS AND DEEP PERSONAL TRAGEDY HAVE SHAPED THEM!
SO VIOLENCE LIVES WITHIN THEM... AND GIVEN THE OCCASION, IT CAN BECOME AN ICY, REMORSELESS VENGEANCE!
YOUR COHORTS ARE FINISHED! YOUR WHOLE BLOODY CREW IS DONE FOR!
NO SENSE IN YOUR HIDING BEHIND THAT MASK ANY LONGER...! IT'S A POOR DISGUISE FOR ONE AS BIG AND UGLY AS YOU, UBU!
19

ADMIT IT, *UBU!* YOU'VE BEEN TAKING MY MEASURE... YOU'VE BEEN WONDERING WHETHER YOU CAN HANDLE ME! YOU WANT TO *PROVE* YOURSELF AGAINST *THE BATMAN!*

AMERICAN... *FILTHY AMERICAN...*

I SHALL DANCE ON YOUR *CORPSE!*

NOT *LIKELY!* OH, SURE --YOU'RE *LARGE... POWERFUL...*

...BUT SIZE AND STRENGTH DON'T COUNT FOR *MUCH!* *SKILL* IS THE ITEM! *AGILITY* HELPS, TOO!

AND *THOSE* THINGS YOU *LACK!* YOU'RE *CLUMSY...*

...CLUMSY AND *SOFT!* A GUT LIKE A *PILLOW...*

OHHHH!

...AND A CHIN AS FRAGILE AS A *SOAP BUBBLE!*

YOU'VE BEEN GETTING BY, BY *SCARING* PEOPLE! WELL *THE BATMAN* DOESN'T SCARE!

20

AFTER YOU, UBU!

LOOK WHO'S JOINED THE MERRIMENT, *ROBIN!* THE HONORABLE *RÀ'S AL GHŪL* AND HIS GIRL-CHILD!

AHHH...MY DEAR, DEAR DETECTIVE! I SHOULD HAVE *REALIZED* I COULD NOT ESCAPE YOUR SCRUTINY!

DON'T BOTHER WITH AN ELABORATE EXPLANATION! I *KNOW* YOU FAKED BEING SHOT... I FIGURED OUT *EVERYTHING*...

...EXCEPT *WHY!* YOU'VE STAGED A COMPLICATED QUEST... AND THE DANGERS ALONG THE WAY WERE *REAL!*

21

YOU WOULD HAVE *LET* ME BE *KILLED* IF I HADN'T SAVED MYSELF! YOU WENT TO A LOT OF TROUBLE FOR A *GAME!*

NO GAME, DETECTIVE! YOUR ADMIRABLE MIND HAS REASONED ALL SAVE THE *OBVIOUS*...

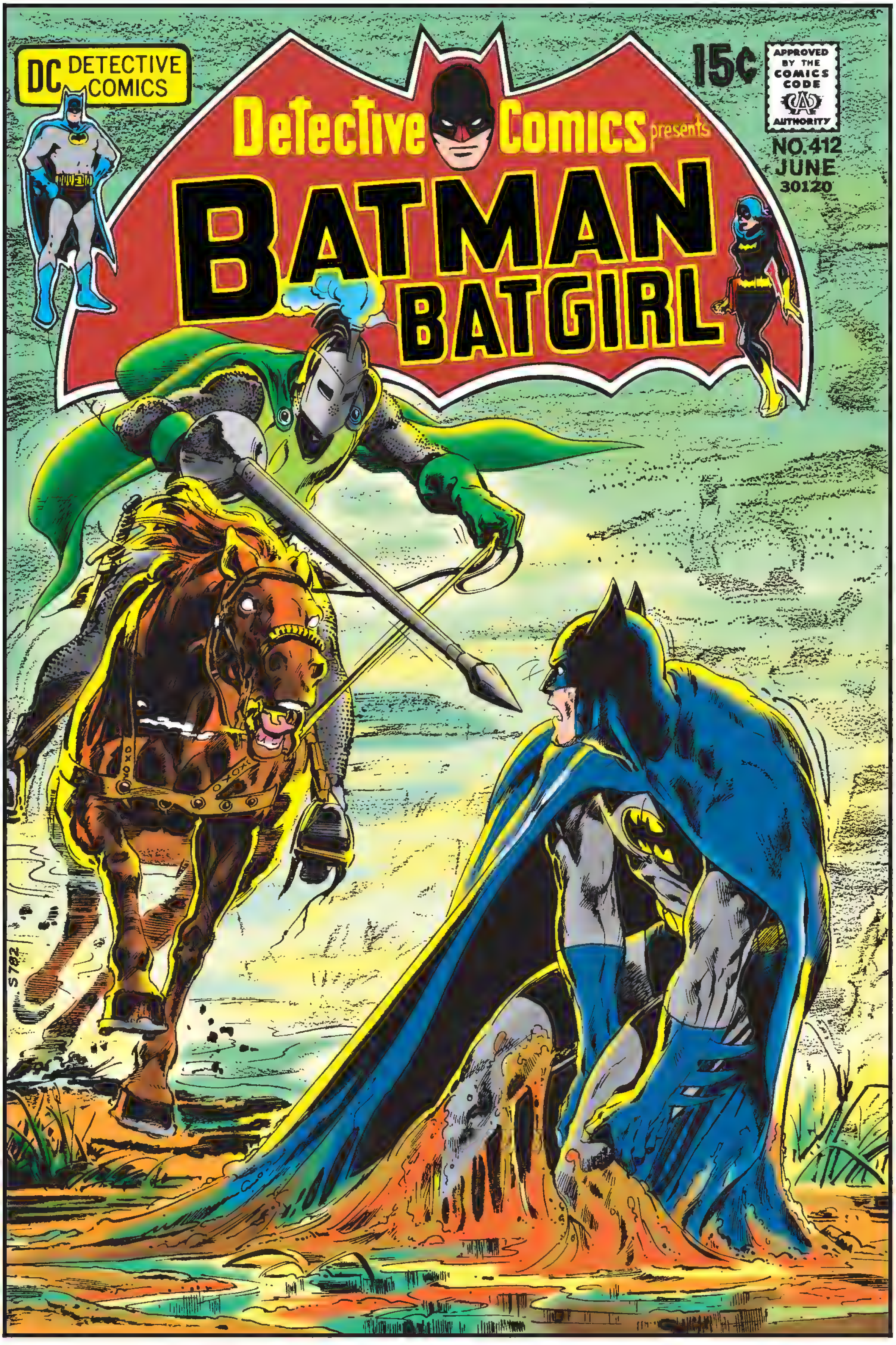
...THAT MY DARLING *TALIA* *LOVES YOU!*

MY ORGANIZATION IS *VAST...!* I CONSIDER *RETIRING* FROM MY ACTIVITIES--!

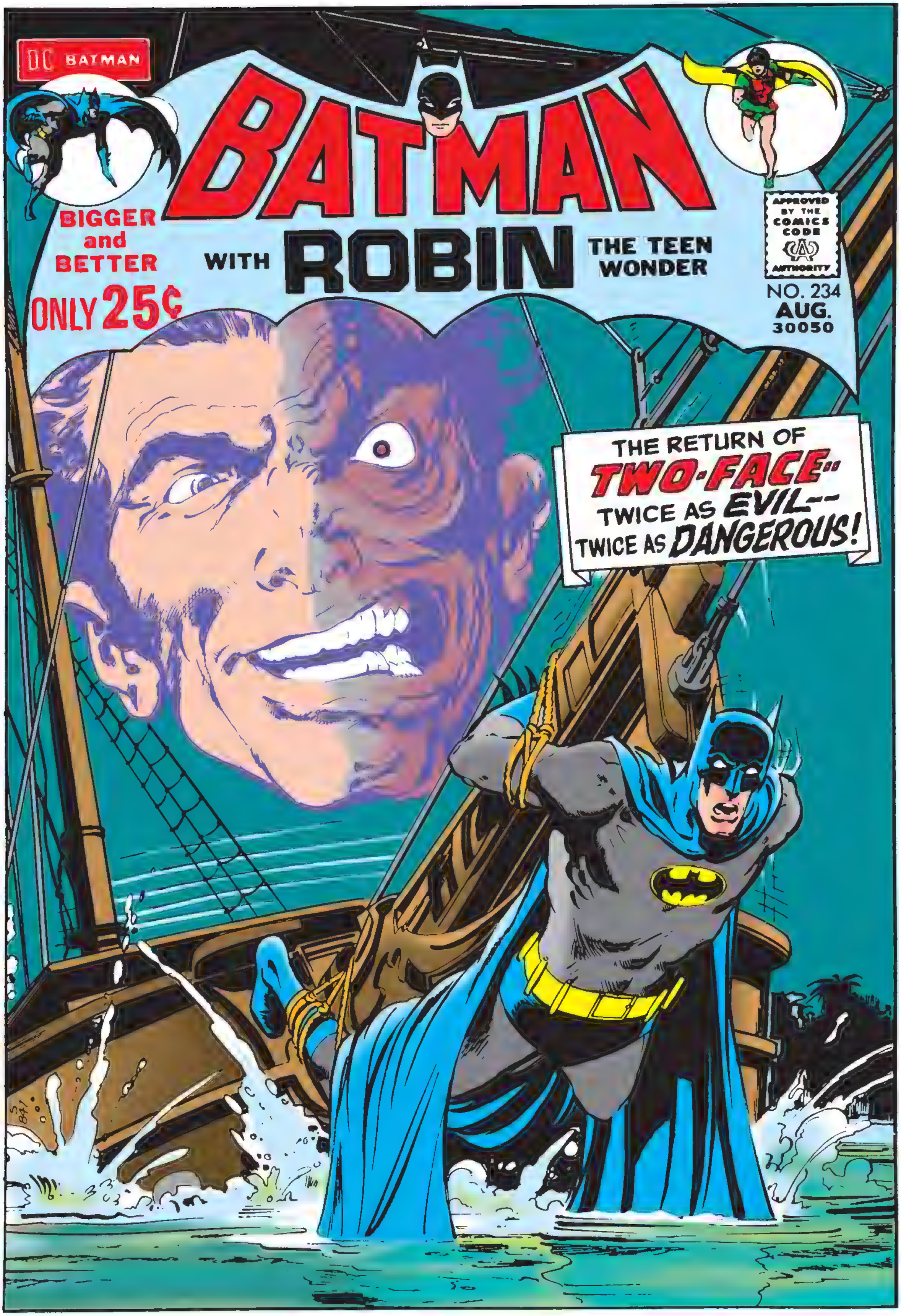
I HAD TO *SATISFY* MYSELF THAT *YOU* ARE A *WORTHY SUCCESSOR* TO ME!... A WORTHY *SON-IN-LAW!*

WHO *KNOWS* EXACTLY WHAT *RĀ'S AL GHŪL* AND HIS LOVELY *TALIA* ARE PLANNING NEXT?--CERTAINLY NOT *THE BATMAN!* *MORE TO COME SOON!*

22


DC DETECTIVE COMICS
15¢
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
NO. 412
JUNE
30120
Detective Comics presents
BATMAN
BATGIRL
S 792

DC DETECTIVE COMICS
Detective Comics presents
BATMAN AND BATGIRL
15¢
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
NO. 413
JULY
30120
TAKE THAT SCARECROW DOWN... NOW!
YOUR LITTLE GAME HAS GONE FAR ENOUGH!


DC BATMAN
BATMAN
WITH ROBIN
THE TEEN WONDER
BIGGER and BETTER
ONLY 25¢
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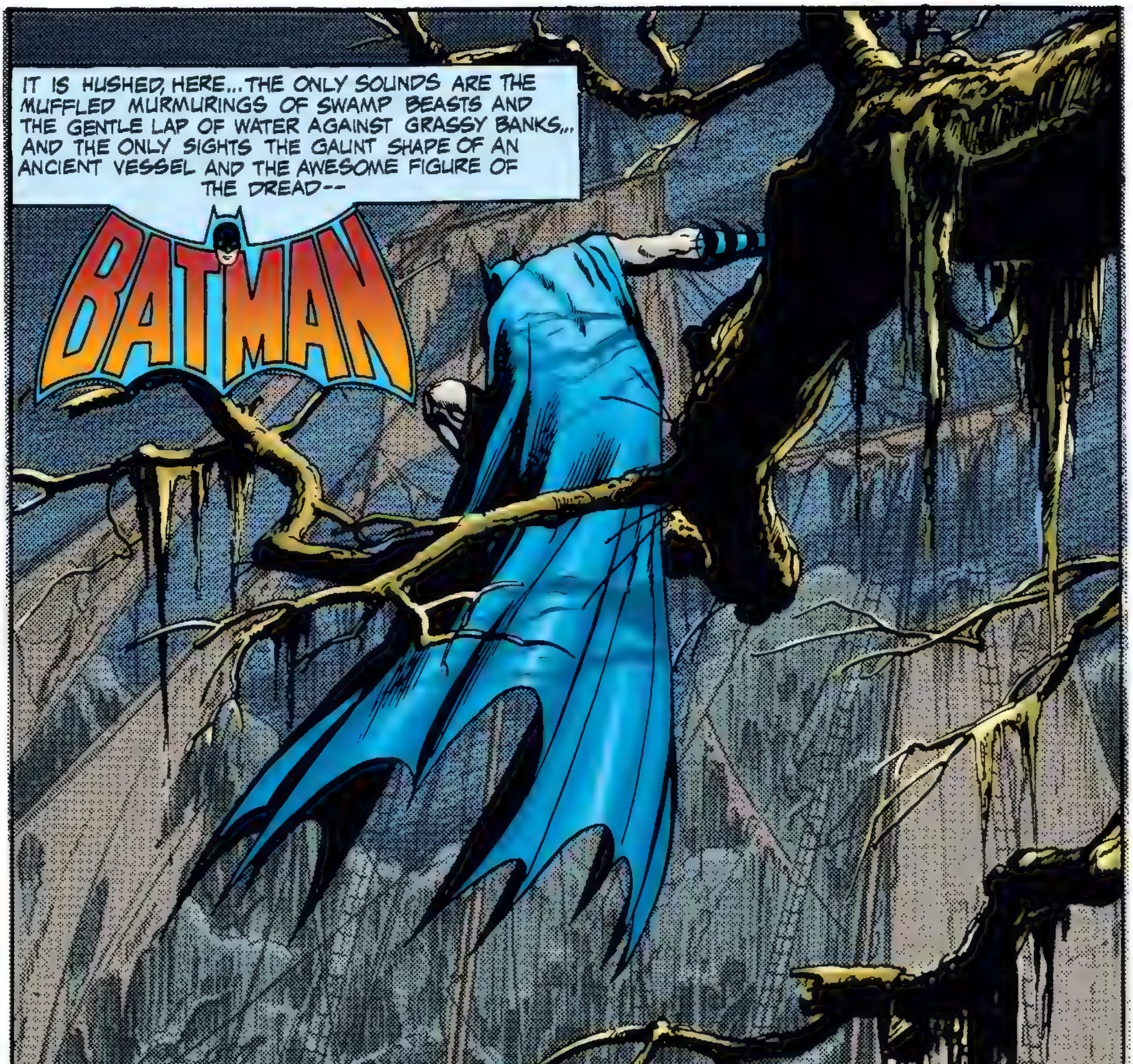
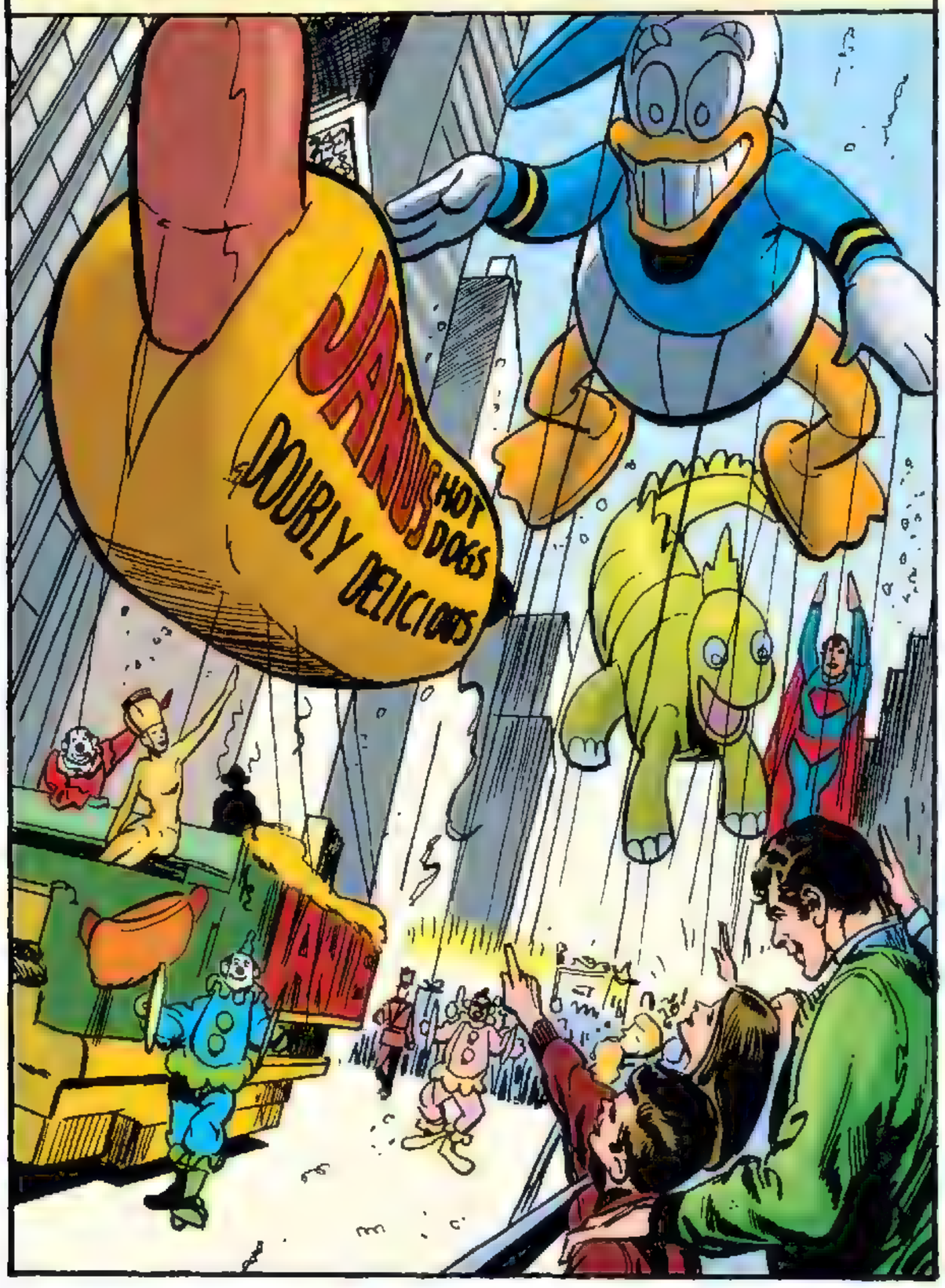
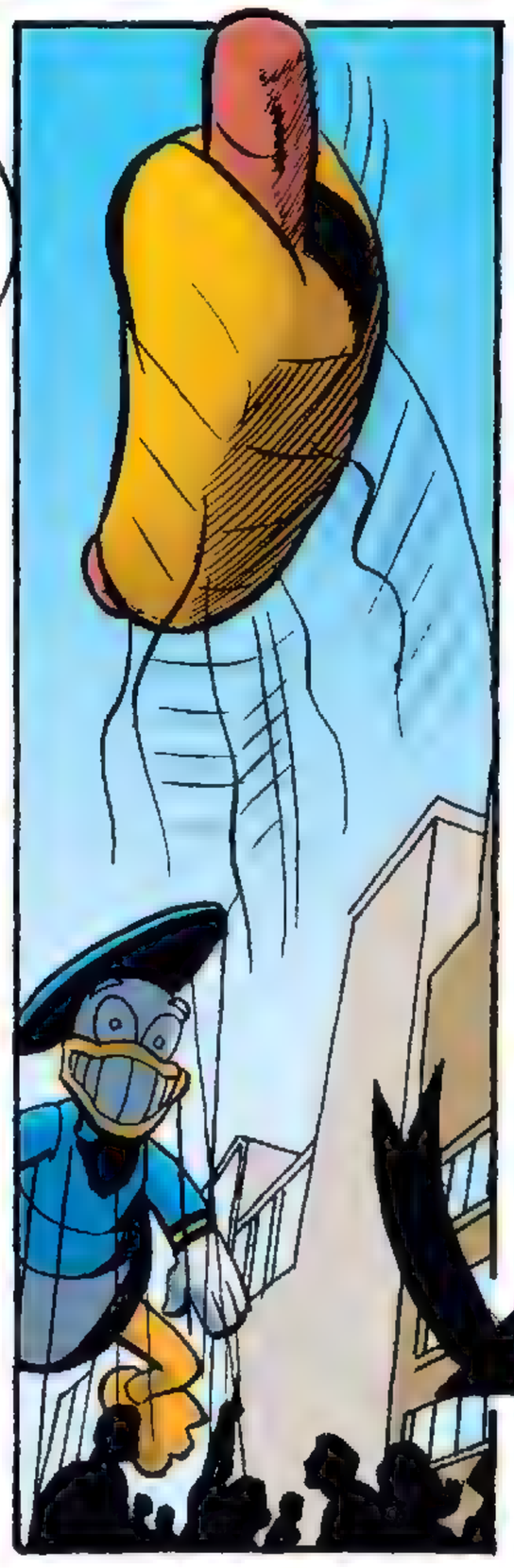
NO. 234
AUG.
30050
THE RETURN OF TWO-FACE-- TWICE AS EVIL-- TWICE AS DANGEROUS!


IT IS HUSHED, HERE...THE ONLY SOUNDS ARE THE MUFFLED MURMURINGS OF SWAMP BEASTS AND THE GENTLE LAP OF WATER AGAINST GRASSY BANKS... AND THE ONLY SIGHTS THE GAUNT SHAPE OF AN ANCIENT VESSEL AND THE AWESOME FIGURE OF THE DREAD--
BATMAN
BUT BE NOT DECEIVED BY THE SERENITY! THERE IS DANGER IN THIS PEACEFUL PLACE, MYSTERY, AND THE SHADOW OF DEATH...FOR HERE LURKS...
HALF AN EVIL
STORY BY= DENNY O'NEIL
ART BY= NEAL ADAMS & DICK GIORDANO
EDITED BY=JULIE SCHWARTZ
S-753

IT BEGINS AT THE ANNUAL *GOTHAM CITY MERCHANTS'* PARADE...A MERRY PROCESSION OF FLOATS THROUGH THE BUSINESS DISTRICT, CELEBRATING THE PRODUCTS AND SERVICES OF THE MIGHTY METROPOLIS...



NONE OF THE GRINNING SPECTATORS IS AWARE THAT A *CRIME* IS BEING COMMITTED BEFORE THEIR EYES...



SOME ONLOOKERS ARE PUZZLED...MOST THINK THE BALLOON'S DISAPPEARANCE INTO THE BELLY OF A HOVERING HELICOPTER IS MERELY PART OF THE SHOW...

THAT NIGHT, A FAMILIAR SHAPE APPEARS ON THE STARLESS NIGHT-SKY--A SILENT CALL FOR *THE BATMAN!*

AND INSIDE THE OFFICE OF POLICE COMMISSIONER GORDON, A CERTAIN PUBLIC SERVANT IS WAVING HIS ARMS... AND SCREECHING JUST A BIT--

I DO NOT UNDERSTAND *WHY* YOU FEEL COMPELLED TO SUMMON THAT... THAT MASKED *BLACKGUARD!*

BECAUSE, MR. REEVES, THE THEFT OF A FRANKFURTER-SHAPED HELIUM BALLOON IS AN *UN-USUAL* CRIME... TO SAY THE LEAST!

AND THE *UNUSUAL* IS THE *SPECIALTY* OF *THE BATMAN!*

WELL, I HOPE HE SHOWS UP-- THAT'S ALL! I'M *TIRED* OF HIS MEDDLING IN CITY AFFAIRS...

I MAY DECIDE TO SEE HOW TOUGH HE *REALLY* IS! AN ARTHUR REEVES *LEFT*... FOLLOWED BY A REEVES *RIGHT!*

...I'LL TAKE HIM DOWN A PEG OR TWO... *OHH!*

BOO!

YOU CALLED ME ABOUT THAT ODD *ROBBERY* THIS AFTERNOON, COMMISSIONER!

YES...IT SEEMED TO BE YOUR SORT OF CASE! ANY *IDEAS?*

A *DIM* ONE, SIR! SO UNLIKELY IT'S HARDLY WORTH *MENTIONING!*

COMMISSIONER! THE ALARM AT THE *NAUTICAL MUSEUM* IS RINGING!

HAVE MY CAR BROUGHT TO THE FRONT DOOR!

COME ON, *BATMAN!* I'LL DRIVE YOU...

YOU HAVE *YOUR* TRANS-PORTATION... AND I HAVE *MINE!* SEE YOU THERE!

BANG BANG BANG

BARE MINUTES LATER...

THE GUARDS ARE SHOOTING AT THE GETAWAY CAR...AND NOT DOING MUCH *GOOD!*

THEY'RE *DUMB* CROOKS... SHOWING THEMSELVES ON THE *STREET! UNLESS...*

...THEY *PLANNED* ON BEING SEEN!... TO DIVERT THE GUARDS FROM WHERE THE *REAL* ACTION IS... *INSIDE!*

YES...THERE'S A *FLASHLIGHT* MOVING IN THE NEXT GALLERY!

WILL YOU GET IT IN GEAR? THIS JOINT GIVES ME THE CREEPY-CRAWLIES!

GO CHEW YOUR TONGUE! I *GOT* THE JUNK WE WAS SENT FOR!

EXACTLY *WHAT* JUNK, FUNNY-FACE?

4

THE BATMAN?

DON'T GAB... BLAST HIM!

NOT LIKELY!

THE OTHER ONE-- PITCHING A SMOKE-GRENADE! THEY'RE WELL-EQUIPPED FOR COMMON RIP-OFF ARTISTS!

SSSSSSSSS

UH!...

I'VE GOT TO COUNT THE GRENADE-TOSSER AS A DEAD LOSS... NO WAY OF FOLLOWING HIM THROUGH THE FUMES!

BUT THIS CHARMER ISN'T GOING ANYWHERE... EXCEPT INTO A ROOM OF FRESH AIR!

WAK

STAY BACK, BATMAN... OR SO HELP ME, I'LL SCRAMBLE YOUR BRAINS! I DON'T WANNA MIX WITH YOU--!

JUST... KEEP AWAY!

NO NEED TO GET UPSET!...

...YOU'RE NO DANGER--NONE AT ALL!

THE *POLICE* WILL ARRIVE SHORTLY! IF YOU'D CARE TO BE *HEALTHY* WHEN THEY TAKE YOU AWAY, YOU'LL ANSWER MY *QUESTIONS!*

S-SURE... *ANYTHING!*

WHO ARE YOU WORKING FOR?

I DUNNO...I *SWEAR* I DON'T! HE'S A *WEIRDO...* FACE *HIDDEN* ALL 'A TIME...

...AN' HE KEEPS TOSSIN' SOME KINDA *COIN!*

ONE MORE THING... WHAT DID YOUR PAL *STEAL?*

A LOUSY *BOOK...* THE *"DIARIES OF CAPTAIN BYE"!*

BYE? YES, YES... THAT MAKES IT *CERTAIN!*

YOUR BOSS IS ONE OF THE *STRANGEST* CRIMINAL GENIUSES WHO EVER LIVED! ONE OF THE MOST *TRAGIC*...AND ONE OF THE *DEADLIEST!*

AT THAT MOMENT, IN A SHACK NEAR THE *GOTHAM CITY DOCKS...*

YOU *GOT* IT?... THE *DIARY?*

YEAH...ONLY MY BUDDY WAS *NABBED!*

THAT'S VERY *UNFORTUNATE...* FOR *HIM!* IT'S NO CONCERN OF *MINE,* HOWEVER! *THIS* IS THE IMPORTANT THING...

...THIS *WRITING!* A CIPHER-EXPERT I MET IN PRISON TOLD ME THERE IS IN THESE PAGES THE CODED CLUE TO A *FORTUNE!*

AND *I* HAVE THE *KEY* TO THE CODE! BUT WILL I *USE* IT? WILL I ACTUALLY *COMMIT* THE CRIME?

THAT IS FOR THE *COIN* TO DECIDE!

WHICH FACE WILL IT SHOW? WHICH SIDE... THE *WHOLE...*

...OR THE *RUINED?*

6

THE COIN HAS *DECIDED!* THE *EVIL* PART OF MY NATURE WINS... AND SO *TWO-FACE* MUST *STRIKE!*

AS THE BELLS OF *GOTHAM CITY* TOLL *MIDNIGHT*, WEALTHY SOCIALITE *BRUCE WAYNE* STANDS ON THE BALCONY OF HIS PENTHOUSE, CONFERRING WITH HIS BUTLER, *ALFRED*...

A KNOTTY *PROBLEM*, MASTER BRUCE?

WORSE, ALFRED! I SUSPECTED THAT OUR OLD ENEMY *TWO-FACE* WAS BEHIND THE *BALLOON* THEFT...

...HE COULDN'T *RESIST* THE SLOGAN ON THE FLOAT--"*DOUBLY DELICIOUS!*" OR THE NAME "*JANUS*"... THE *TWO-FACED* ROMAN GOD!

ARE YOU SURE, SIR? ISN'T *TWO-FACE* STILL IN JAIL?

HE ESCAPED... SEVERAL MONTHS AGO! HOW COULD ANY JAIL HOPE TO HOLD A MAN SO CLEVER AND DEVIOUS AS *HARVEY*?

TSSSSS

"REMEMBER, ALFRED, HOW *TWO-FACE* CAME TO BE? HOW MANY YEARS AGO WAS IT WHEN THAT *TWO-BIT* GANGSTER HURLED A VIAL OF ACID INTO THE FACE OF *GOTHAM'S* MOST BRILLIANT DISTRICT ATTORNEY, *HARVEY DENT*..."

"...WHAT A MAD AND DIABOLICAL CHASE HE LED *ROBIN* AND *ME* WHEN HIS HALF-RUINED FACE TWISTED HIS MIND TOWARD CRIME..."

"IT WAS ONLY THANKS TO MODERN METHODS OF PLASTIC SURGERY THAT THE PERSONALITY OF HARVEY DENT WAS BROUGHT BACK FROM THE EDGE OF MADNESS..."

"ONCE AGAIN HE RE-ENTERED LAWFUL SOCIETY AND SPENT HIS ENERGIES ON THE SIDE OF JUSTICE...UNTIL ONE UNHOLY DAY HARVEY ATTEMPTED TO STOP A ROBBERY..."

ALL RIGHT, YOU TWO! STAND WHERE YOU ARE--!

"SO INTENT WAS HE ON CAPTURING THE THIEVES, HE FAILED TO SPOT THE SPUTTERING FUSE THEY HAD SET..."

BLAM

"IT WASN'T UNTIL HE STAGGERED HOME AND LOOKED INTO A MIRROR THAT THE FULL EXTENT OF HIS TRAGEDY TOOK HOLD OF HIS MIND ONCE AGAIN..."

THE PLASTIC SURGERY! IT'S *ALL* BEEN UNDONE! IT CAN NEVER BE REPAIRED THIS TIME! I'M DOOMED TO REMAIN *TWO-FACE... FOREVER...*

TWO-FACE... FOREVER!

8.

THEN IT'S NOT SURPRISING, EITHER, THAT HE STOLE A BOOK BY *CAPTAIN BYE*-- WHICH SOUNDS LIKE *BI*, THE PREFIX MEANING *TWO!*

AS IN *BISECT*, SIR!

EXACTLY! I'D *RELAX* IF I COULD FEEL IT'S *ENDED*...BUT *TWO-FACE* WON'T QUIT--UNLESS THAT BLASTED COIN *TELLS* HIM TO! THOSE THEFTS MUST BE *LEADING* TO SOMETHING...

...AND I'VE GOT TO FIND OUT *WHAT!* MAYBE THE *MARINE ENCYCLOPEDIA* HAS INFORMATION ON CAPTAIN *BYE*...

ALFRED! I'VE *FOUND* IT-- I *THINK!*

BYE'S OLD SHIP...A *TWO*-MASTED SCHOONER...IS DOCKED AT A *MARINA* ACROSS THE RIVER! I'LL BET TREES TO TOOTHPICKS THAT'S WHERE *TWO-FACE* IS HEADING...

...AND SO IS *THE BATMAN!*

A SLEEK ROADSTER CUTS THROUGH THE DARKNESS, ACROSS A MAMMOTH BRIDGE...

...AND HURTLES ONTO A PIER FRONTING ONE OF *GOTHAM'S* TWIN RIVERS!

MY GUESS WAS *GOOD!* THE OLD SCHOONER'S BEEN CUT LOOSE...IT'S DRIFTING INTO THE CURRENT!

...AND THOSE THUGS MUST BE *TWO-FACE'S* NEW PLAYMATES!

THAT CAR AIN'T ONE OF *OURS!*

PROB'LY THE *HEAT!* GIVE IT TO 'EM!

HE CAN'T *SEE...* HE'S FIRING AT WHERE HE *FIGURES* I AM! THE AUTOMATIC PILOT-TYPE CONTROLS IN THAT MODEL BAT-MOBILE ARE PRECISION PERFECT!

I'VE BEEN IN THIS SITUATION TOO *OFTEN* TO DO THE *OBVIOUS!*

AYIEEEE

BRAKATAK

NUMBER *TWO'S* GETTING INTO THE ACT! THIS CALLS FOR A *SUBTERRANEAN* ATTACK!

CHOK

10

THE SHIP HASN'T REACHED SWIFT WATER YET... DRIFTING *SLOWLY!*

I *SHOULD* BE ABLE TO SWIM TO IT...

AN EXPLOSION--?!

BLADOOOM

THE ANCIENT VESSEL LISTS, SHUDDERS, SINKS!

NUMB WITH ASTONISHMENT, *THE BATMAN* TURNS, HIS MIND SEEKING... DESPERATELY SEEKING!...

IT DOESN'T MAKE *SENSE*-- *NONE!* WHY WOULD *TWO-FACE* GO TO ALL THAT TROUBLE... STAGE THE THEFT OF A SHIP...

...AND THEN *SINK* HIS PRIZE?!

GOT TO *CONCENTRATE*... CONSIDER ALL FACTORS OF THE CASE--AND COME UP WITH AN *ANSWER!*

THE FACTS ARE IN...AND THERE *IS* A SOLUTION! HAVE *YOU* DEDUCED *TWO-FACE'S* INTENTION?

MEET NOW *BILLY THE TRAMP*... HAVING AN EARLY MORNING NAP IN A BACKWATER BAY SOUTH OF *GOTHAM*. HE'S HAD A HARD NIGHT, BILLY HAS--

BUT NOT *NEARLY* AS HARD AS HIS *MORNING* WILL BE! FOR THE TOP-MAST OF A SHIP POKES ABOVE THE BAY NEAR HIS HEAD...

...AND...

NEARBY, THE *BATMAN* LURKS...

RIGHT ON TIME! THE TIDE-CHARTS SHOWED THAT IF A FLOATING OBJECT WERE SUNK NEAR THE PIER WHERE I COOLED *TWO-FACE'S* HENCHMEN...

...BUT NOT *ENTIRELY* SUNK-- IT WOULD DRIFT *HERE!*

TWO-FACE HASN'T ARRIVED YET! I'LL BE WAITING FOR HIM WHEN HE *DOES!*

AND ON HIS WAY TO JAIL, I'LL EXPLAIN THAT I DEDUCED WHY HE NEEDED A BIG *BALLOON*--

--TO PUT IN THE *HOLD* OF THIS TUB, RIGGED TO *INFLATE* AFTER A PROPER INTERVAL!

--TO *RAISE* IT IN A QUIET COVE WHERE HE CAN WORK *UNDISTURBED!*

12

EH? WHO THE DEUCE IS *THAT* IN THE *RIGGING?* LOOKS LIKE A *HOBO!* HOW IN THE NAME OF ALL THAT'S HOLY DID HE *GET* THERE?

I WAS SURE *THE BATMAN* WOULD TAKE A HAND! SO I HID IN THE SHIP'S HOLD, BREATHING WITH AN OXYGEN MASK...

GROGGY... BUT... NOT *OUT*...GOT TO *EXPAND* MY MUSCLES ...PREVENT HIM TYING LINE TIGHTLY--

QUICKLY, THE WET-SUITED CRIMINAL PRODUCES A LENGTH OF WIRE-ROPE, AND BEGINS LASHING THE *CAPED CRUSADER* TO A MAST...

I'LL HAUL HIM DOWN...

I DON'T WANT ANY *DIS-TRACTIONS* WHEN THE *FIRE-WORKS* BEGIN... *UNNNGH!*

KAK

DON'T PRETEND YOU'RE NOT *AWAKE,* OLD FOE! I WANT YOU TO *SEE*-- HOW YOU'LL *DIE! UGLY,* YOU'LL DIE... UGLY AS THE ACCIDENT THAT MADE ME A *FREAK!*

I PUT A HOT EMBER TO THE BALLOON WHICH HELD THIS SCOW AFLOAT *ONCE*--AND FOR THE *SECOND* TIME...

PAWOOSH

...AND WHILE THE GAS *ESCAPES,* I SMASH AWAY THIS MOLDING...

BEHOLD, A FORTUNE IN *GOLD* COMES SPILLING... GOLD *DOUBLOONS*, JUST AS *CAPTAIN BYE'S* DIARY *PROMISED!*

HAVING FILLED HIS SACK, *TWO-FACE* WHIRLS TO A LIFEBOAT, AND...

WITHIN *MOMENTS*, THIS SCOW WILL HAVE SUNK...TAKING A *BATMAN* WITH IT!

NOT ONLY *ME!* LOOK-- UP IN THE *RIGGING!*

ARE YOU GOING TO LET *HIM* DROWN-- AN *INNOCENT*, OLD MAN?

HIS MISFORTUNE, BATMAN...AND NO CONCERN OF *MINE!*

YOU'VE ALWAYS *PRIDED* YOURSELF ON BEING AS *GOOD* AS YOU ARE *EVIL!* WAS YOUR PRIDE A MERE *POSE?*

QUIET, BATMAN! MY DECISION IS *FINAL!*

ONCE MORE *CAPTAIN BYE'S* SCHOONER SETTLES, WATER CREEPING RAPIDLY UP ITS HULL--! *TWO-FACE* TRIES TO IGNORE IT...

...BUT *CAN'T!* RELUCTANTLY, HE REMOVES THE DOUBLE-HEADED COIN FROM HIS POUCH, FLIPS IT... AND...

BATMAN-- YOU'RE FREE?!

I MIGHT HAVE KNOWN--

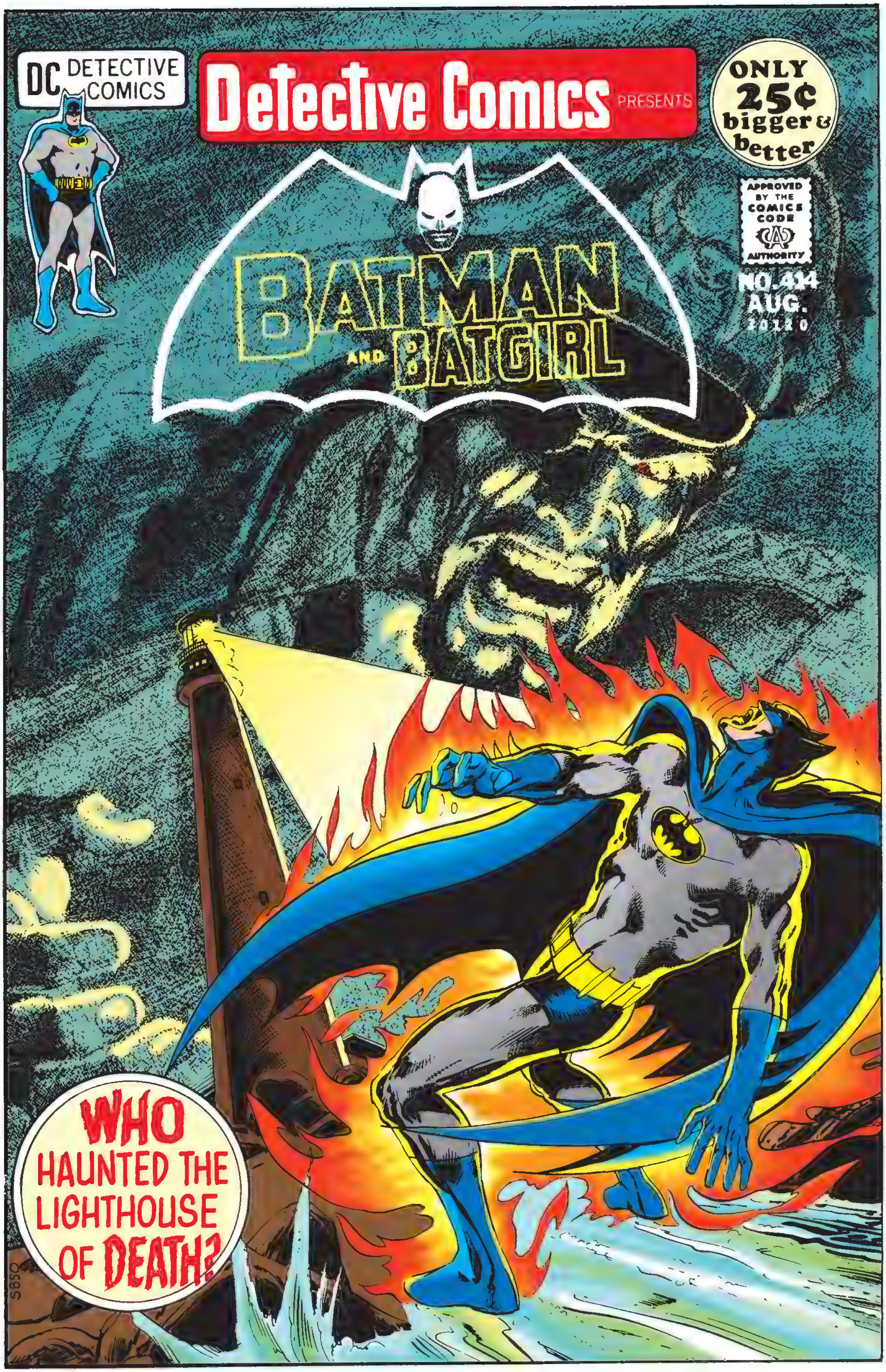
IT WASN'T DIFFICULT! I EXPANDED MY MUSCLES WHILE YOU WERE ROPING ME! BY CONTRACTING THEM, I GOT ENOUGH SLACK TO SLIP OUT OF THE KNOTS!

DO YOU WANT TO SURREN-DER?

NEVER! THE COIN DICTATED I SAVE THE OLD MAN... YOU REMAIN MY ENEMY!

AND THUS IT ENDS...PERHAPS!

15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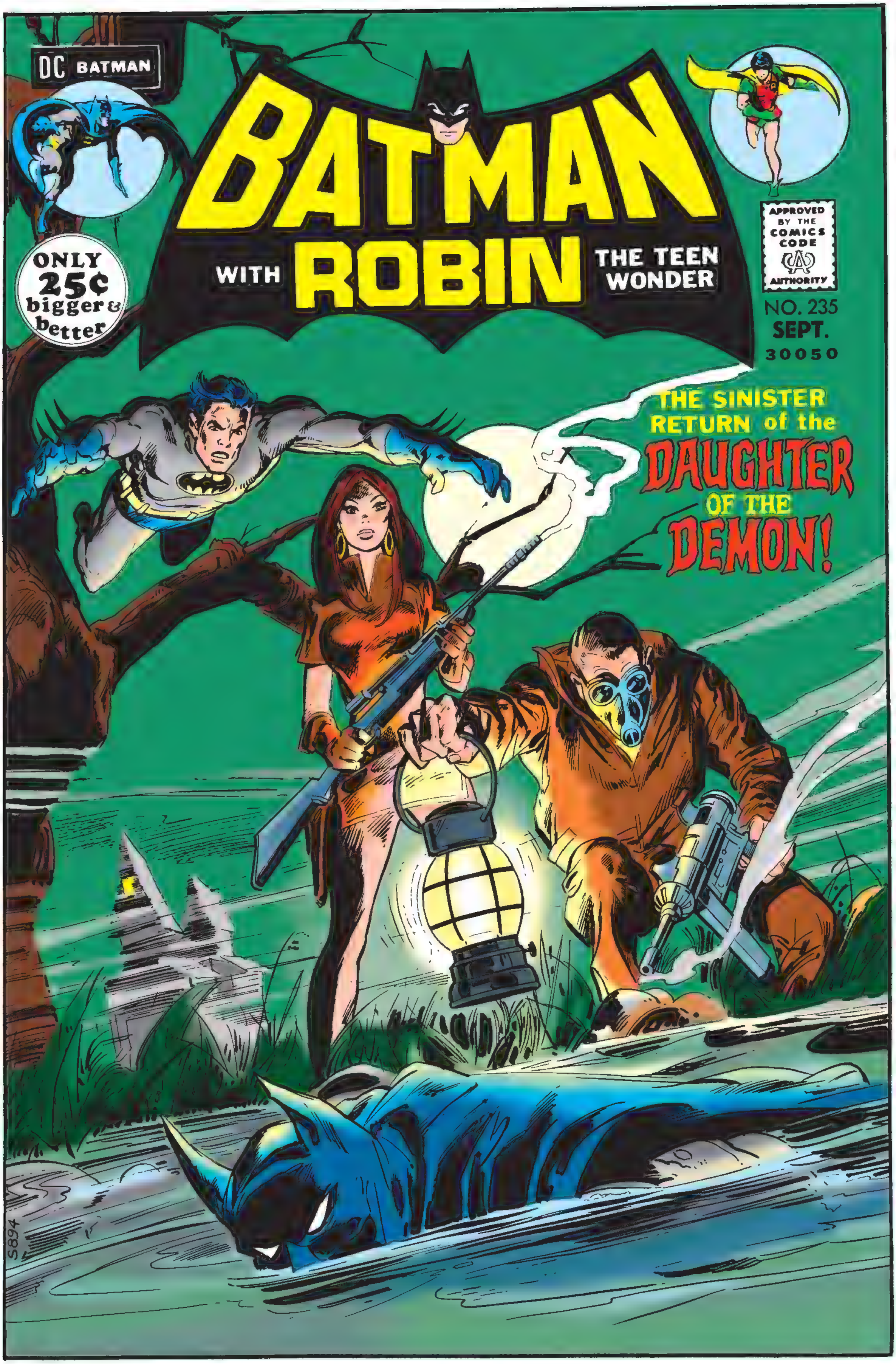
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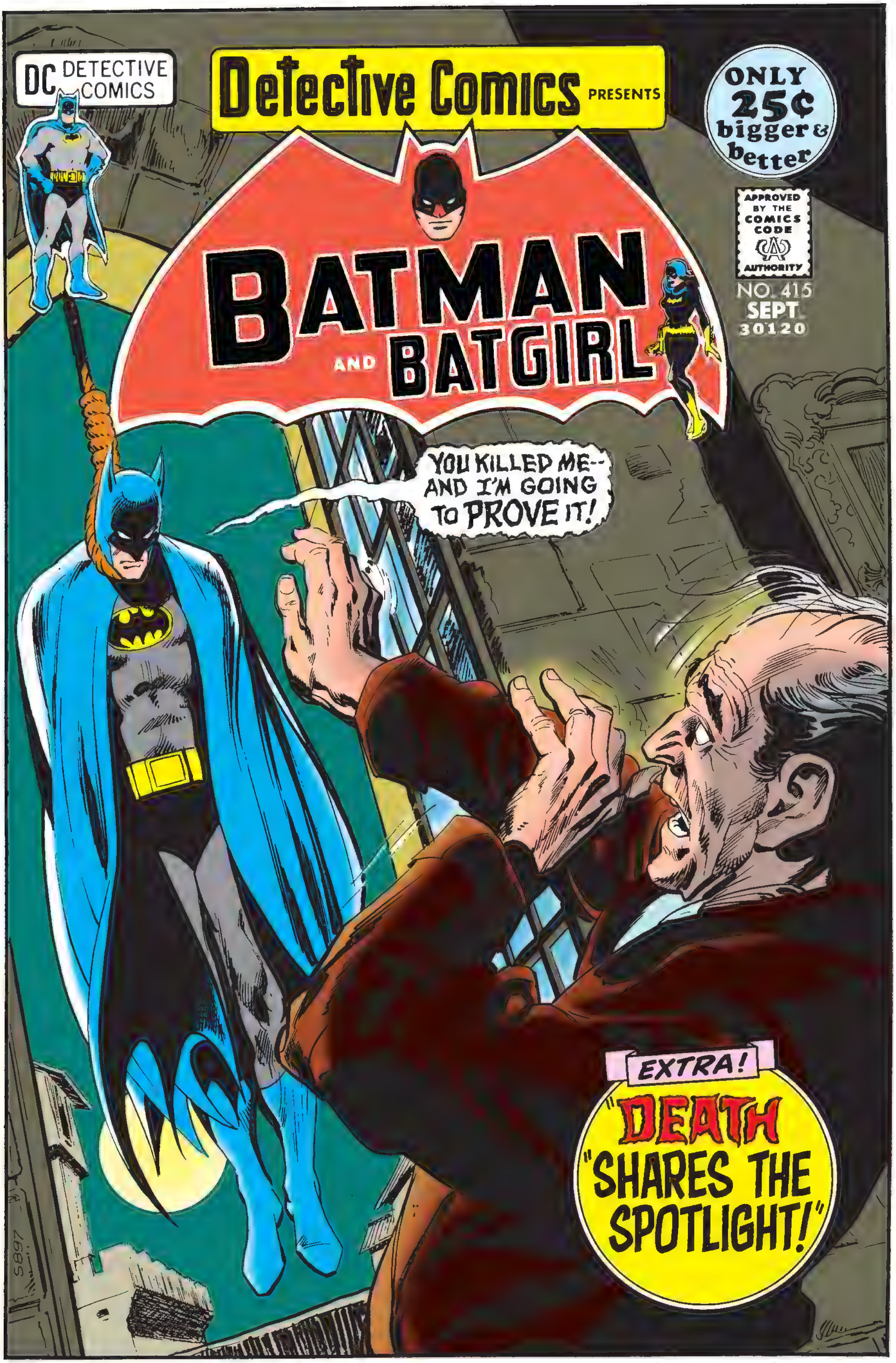
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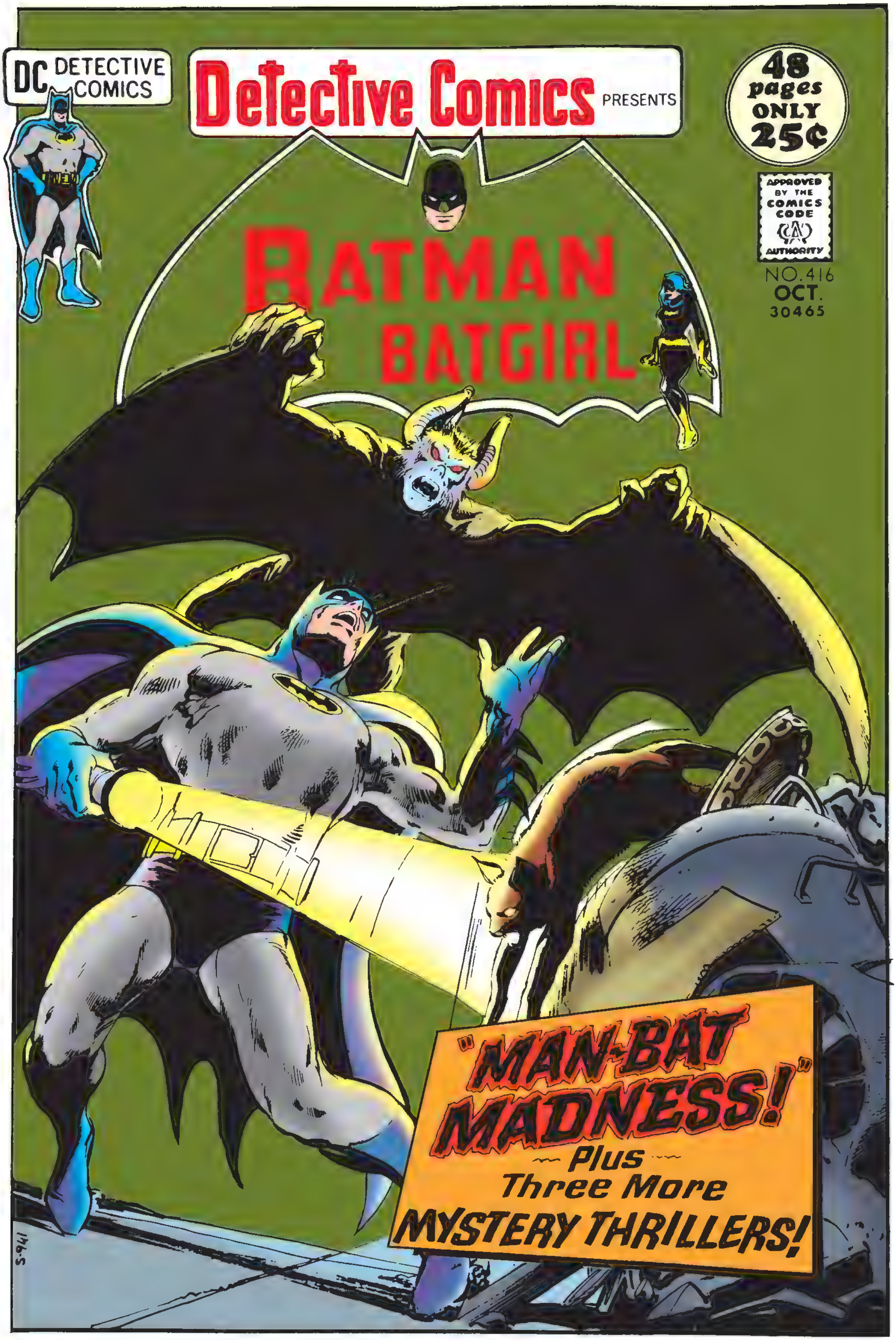
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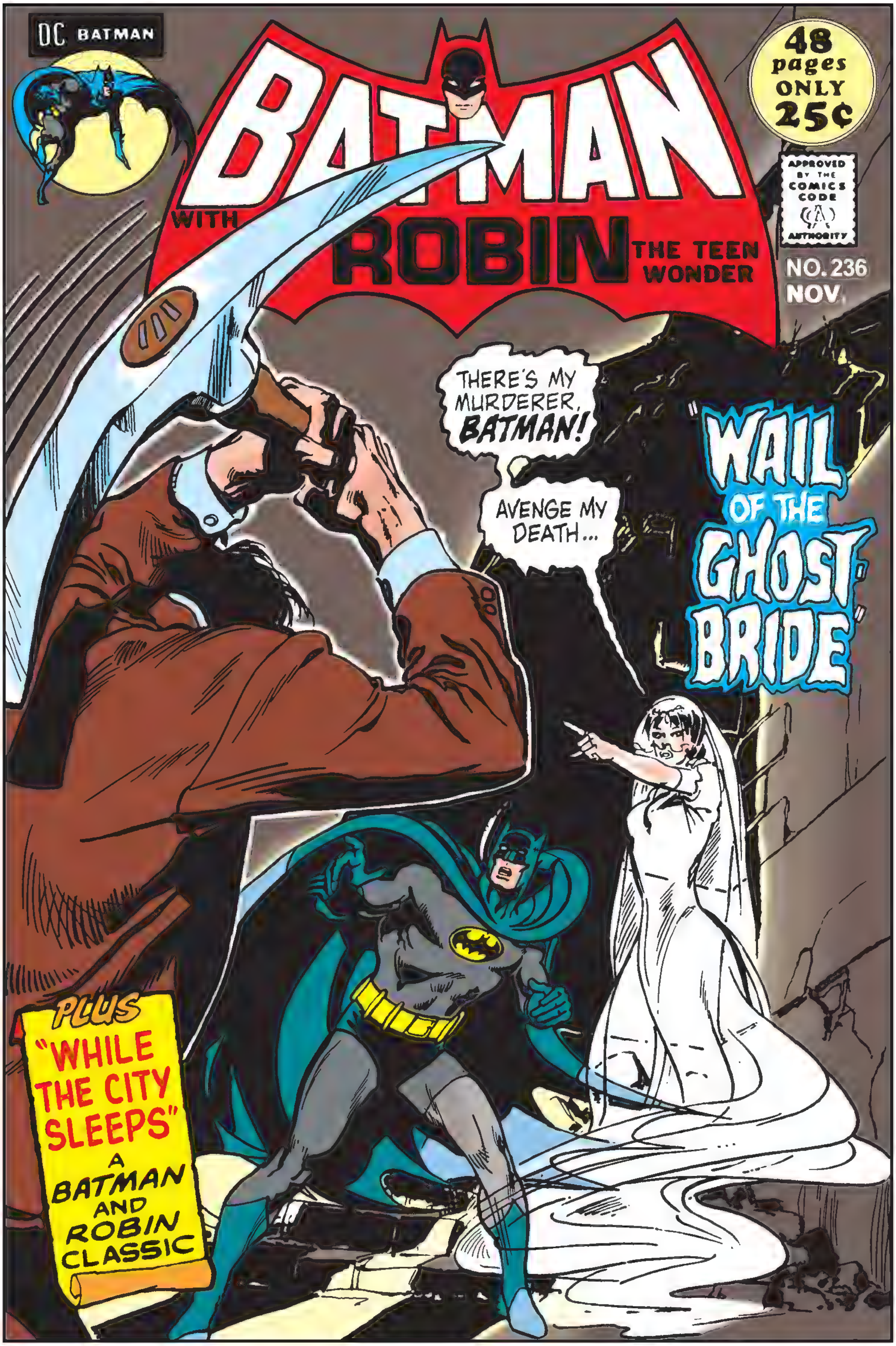
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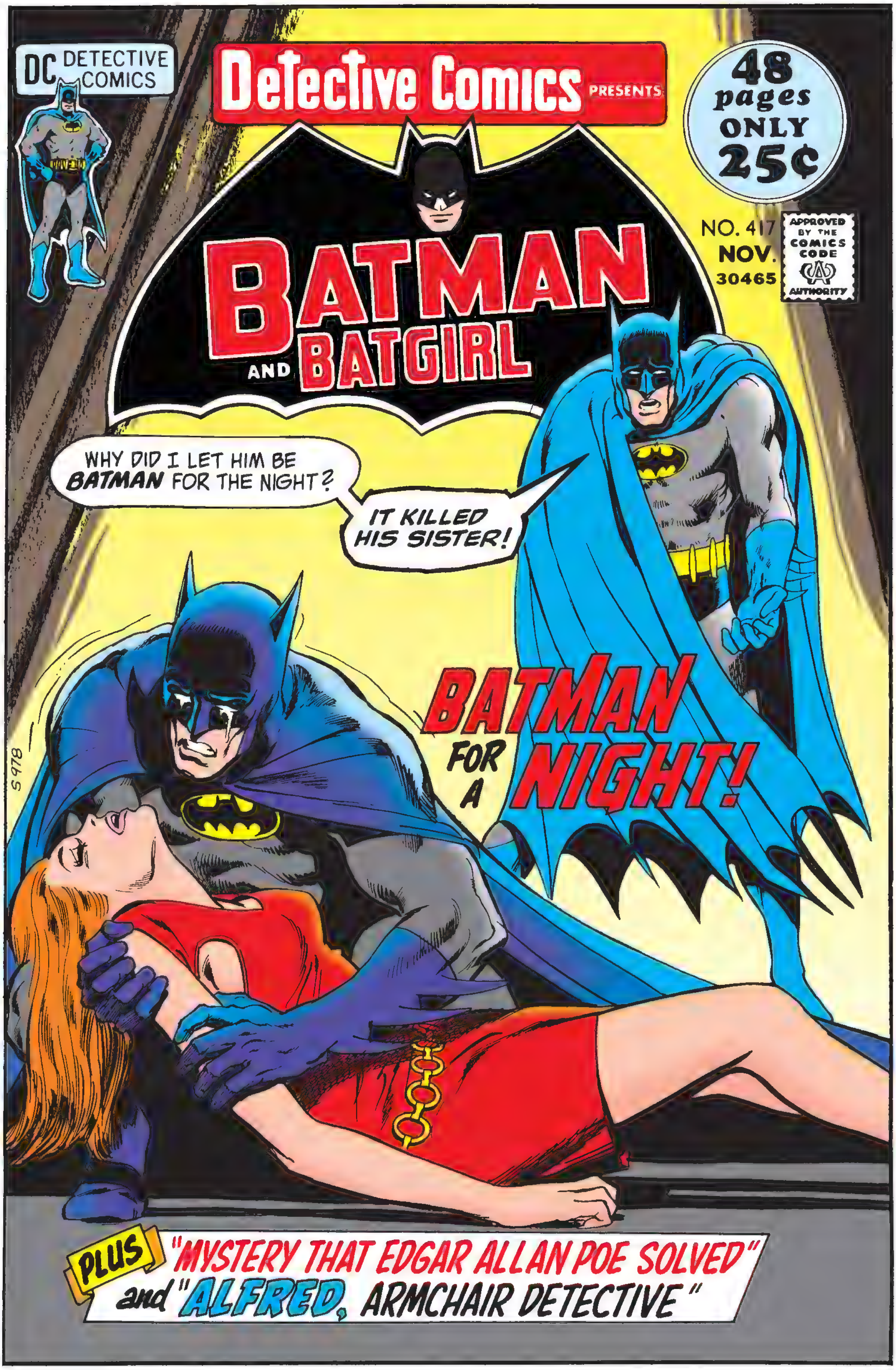
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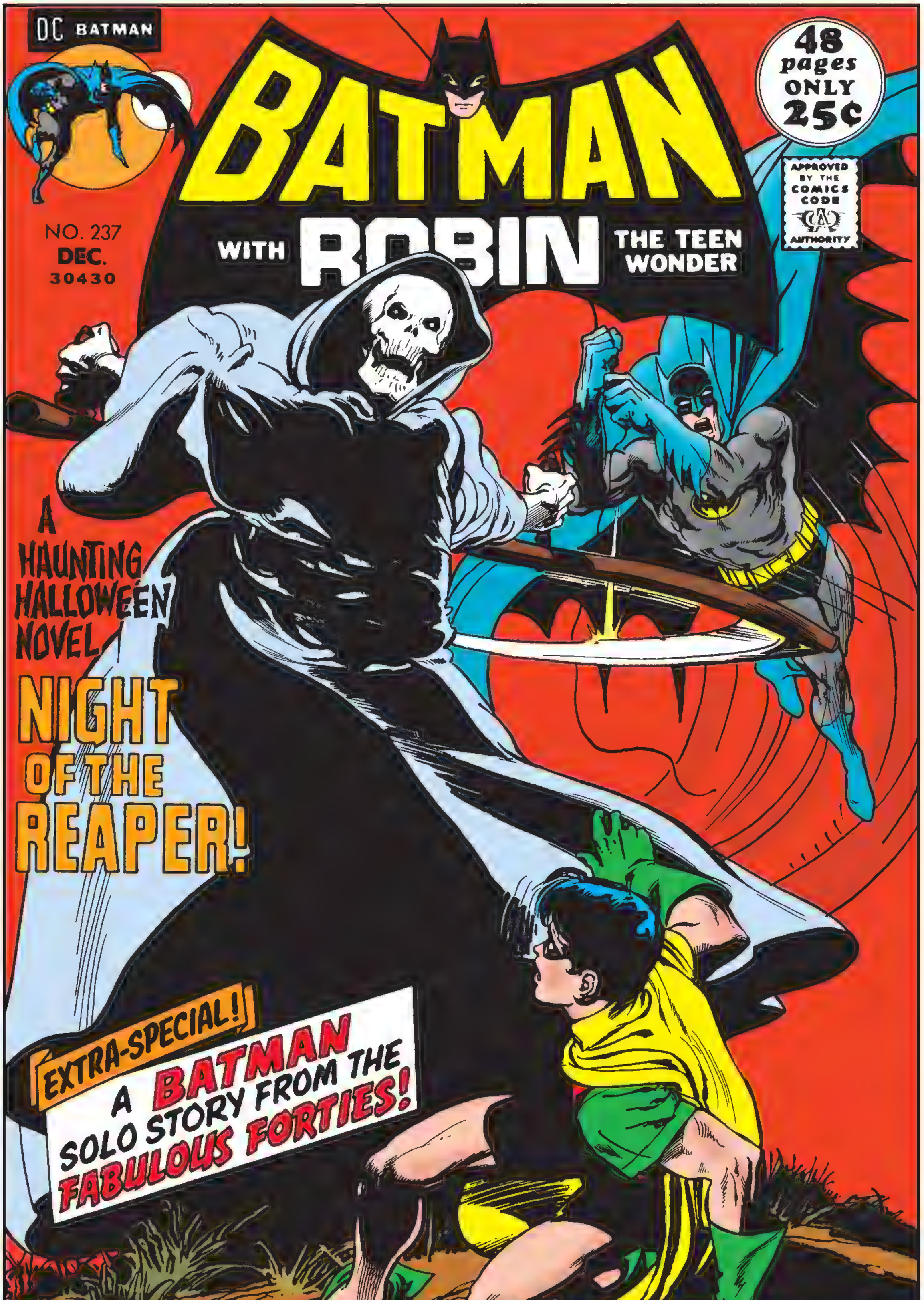
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NIGHT OF THE REAPER!
EXTRA-SPECIAL!
A BATMAN SOLO STORY FROM THE FABULOUS FORTIES!

IT IS DARK IN THE *VERMONT* WOODS THIS OCTOBER EVENING...DARK EXCEPT FOR THE PALE, COLD GLOW OF A BLOATED MOON SHINING THROUGH BRANCHES WHICH PLUCK AT THE SKY LIKE DEAD FINGERS... AND A LIGHT ATOP A DISTANT MANSION BLINKING LIKE AN EYE OF BLOOD, BLINKING, BLINKING.

AND THERE ARE SOUNDS... SCRAPINGS, RUSTLINGS... THE WHISPER OF BREEZE IN THE BRUSH--OR THE STIRRING OF SHROUDS? NONE IS ALIVE TO HEAR...

...BECAUSE THERE IS ALSO *DEATH* IN THIS PLACE! THE MASKED FIGURE OF *THE BATMAN* LEANS AGAINST A BIRCH, UNMOVING, UNBREATHING, GROWING STIFF AND COLD AS THE DIRT... A VICTIM OF THE...

NIGHT OF the REAPER!

ART BY: NEAL ADAMS & DICK GIORDANO
STORY BY: DENNY O'NEIL
(FROM AN IDEA BY BERNI WRIGHTSON WITH AN ASSIST FROM HARLAN ELLISON)
EDITED BY: JULIUS SCHWARTZ

ELSEWHERE, A *FESTIVAL* BRIGHTENS THE AIR... THE ANNUAL *RUTLAND HALLOWEEN* PARADE...

I *STILL* DON'T SEE WHY YOU DRAGGED US UP HERE, DICK! TO SEE A BUNCH OF DUM-DUMS GOOF AROUND DRESSED AS *SUPER-HEROES?*

I THOUGHT IT'D BE NICE TO SET AWAY FROM YE OLDE COLLEGE *GRIND* FOR THE WEEKEND

I'M WITH *DICK!* IT'S FUN... AND BESIDES, WE MIGHT MEET SOME *GIRLS!*

OH, MAN! DIG THE *FLOATS!*

ANY SIMILARITY TO ACTUAL PERSONS OR PLACES DEPICTED IN THIS TALE IS PROBABLY A STRANGER TALE THAN YOU'D EVER REALLY BELIEVE!

2

I'M *WORRIED* ABOUT MY ROOMMATE! HE'S ACTING... *STRANGE!*

HE SHOULDN'T HAVE COME... NOT AFTER STAYING AWAKE THREE DAYS CRAMMING FOR THAT *ART* EXAM!

RIGHT!... AND GULPING COFFEE AND WHO-KNOWS-*WHAT*-ELSE TO KEEP HIS EYES OPEN!

MAN, THOSE FLOATS ARE SOMETHING ELSE!

I HEAR THERE'S A PARTY AT *TOM FAGAN'S* HOUSE OUTSIDE TOWN! WANT TO GO?

SURE! WHERE A PARTY IS, *GIRLS IS!*

FUNNY... I NEVER GOT INTO FLOATS BEFORE!

3

TOM LIVES AT THE END OF THIS STREET--

HEY! UP AHEAD... A FIGHT!

FROM HERE, THE ODDS LOOK THREE-TO-ONE!

WONDER WHY THEY'RE CALLED FLOATS...?

COME ON!

RIGHT BEHIND YOU, DICK!

CAREFUL... THEY GOT BLACKJACKS!

BUT DICK'S WARNING IS SHOUTED TOO LATE!

HE'S DOWN!-- OUT!

MY *OTHER* BUDDY ISN'T DOING TOO WELL, EITHER! I'VE GOT TO *COOL* THESE BUMS-- *SOLO*--

GOT TO HANDLE THEM WITHOUT LOOKING TOO MUCH LIKE A CERTAIN *TEEN WONDER!*

--OR MY SECRET IDENTITY IS *BLOWN!*

THAT'S *TWO* OUT OF THE PROCEEDINGS! NOW TO TACKLE THE *THIRD*...

DICK... DICK, MAN...

SAY, MAN...DID YOU *DIG* THOSE OUTASIGHT FLOATS?

BLAST! HE STUMBLED INTO ME...

A STUNNED MOMENT LATER...

I'M DAZED...WEAK..., NO *WAY* TO CATCH THE HOODS!

AT LEAST WE CHASED 'EM OFF!

YOU GUYS HURT *BAD?*

APART FROM HAVING BRAINS SOGGY AS HUNGARIAN GOULASH, NO... I'm *DANDY!*

5

WHY'D THOSE CATS *JUMP* YOU, FELLA?

I'M NOT *SURE!* FROM SOMETHING THEY SAID, I GOT THE IMPRESSION THEY THOUGHT I WAS THE *REAL ROBIN!*

PROBABLY JUST MUGGERS! CRIME IS ON ALL *KINDS* OF STREETS THESE DAYS!

HEY,,, WHERE'S MY *ROOMMATE?*

I GUESS HE WANDERED OFF DURING OUR LITTLE BRAWL!

YOU GUYS GO ON AHEAD TO THE PARTY! I'LL SEARCH FOR OUR ZONKY PAL!

OKAY, DICK!

THEN, IN A NEARBY CLUMP OF TREES...

I DON'T FOR A *SECOND* BELIEVE THE BLACKJACK CREW WERE CASUAL RIP-OFF ARTISTS--

NO, THEY WORKED LIKE *PROS!* SOMETHING *PUTRID* IS STINKING IN RUTLAND--

SWIFTLY, STEALTHILY, WITH THE SKILL OF THE GREAT *BATMAN* HIMSELF, THE YOUNGSTER SLIPS THROUGH THE FOREST, UNTIL...

...AND THAT'S THE CUE FOR *ROBIN* TO SCOUT THE SCENE!

A *FIGURE* AHEAD... A DARN *FAMILIAR* FIGURE!

BATMAN... IS THAT *YOU?*

OH, DEAR LORD... H-HE'S DEAD!

NO...THIS POOR GUY'S BEEN *MURDERED*, ALL RIGHT--BUT HE'S *NOT* *THE BATMAN!*

THE COSTUME IS CHEAP, SHODDY...MUST HAVE BEEN *RENTED!* HE'S ONE OF THE *PARTY-GOERS!*

THE MOONLIGHT'S SO DIM I CAN'T READ THE GROUND FOR *FOOTPRINTS!* WE MAY HAVE TO WAIT TILL MORNING FOR CLUES...

8

REFLEXIVELY, HE DODGES THE WHISTLING BLADE...

AND TUMBLES TO A CLUSTER OF ROCKS IN A SWIFT-RUNNING STREAM BELOW...

HIS BOOT CATCHES ON A DEW-WET STONE...

FLAILING DESPERATELY, HE PITCHES BACKWARD, OVER THE LIP OF A STEEP INCLINE...

A MOMENT OF BLINDING, EXPLODING PAIN... AND NUMBNESS... AND STILLNESS... AND WATER FILLS HIS NOSTRILS, HIS LUNGS...

MAN, I JUST *GOTTA* FIND SOMEONE TO RAP WITH ABOUT *FLOATS!*

SUDDENLY, A CAPED SHADOW SWELLS FROM THE DARKNESS-- *THE DREAD BATMAN...*

HEARD *SCUFFLING* FROM THIS AREA! HARD TO TELL! EXACTLY *WHAT* MADE THE NOISE WITH THAT STREAM GURGLING...

ROBIN--!? OR A KID WHO COULD BE HIS *DOUBLE!*

PRAY I'M NOT TOO *LATE--*

IS .IS IT REALLY *YOU--?*

EASY, LAD! SAVE YOUR STRENGTH... I'M TAKING YOU TO A *DOCTOR!*

AS *THE BATMAN* CARRIES HIS WARD TO THE SPRAWLING OLD MANSION OF *TOM FAGAN,* THE YOUTH STUMBLINGLY RELATES HIS STORY...

SOON, IN A VACANT BEDROOM...

DO *YOU* MAKE ANY SENSE OF THE WEIRD STUFF GOING DOWN?

I CAN'T EXPLAIN THE ATTACK ON THE BOY DRESSED AS YOU... NOR THE MURDERED MAN WEARING *MY* COSTUME--

IS POSSIBLE *I* CAN, *HERR BATMAN!*

ROBIN, MEET DOCTOR GRUENER! HE'S THE REASON I'M HERE!

JA, IS TRUE! YOU SEE, YOUNG MAN, I VAS ONCE AN INMATE OF A NAZI CONCENTRATION CAMP! ZIS CAMP WAS RUN BY COLONEL KURT SCHLOSS!

I'VE HEARD OF HIM...THE ONE THEY CALLED THE BUTCHER!

JA, IS GOOD NAME, TOO! SCHLOSS LOVED TO HUMILIATE, TORTURE... AND KILL!

A WEEK AGO, I HAPPEN TO BE IN COSTUME SHOP BUYING OUTFIT FOR MY DAUGHTER'S BIRTHDAY...

...AND I SEE SCHLOSS!

ZUR CLERK IN ZUR SHOP TELLS ME HE RENTED HIM PIRATE SUIT! ADDRESS ON SALES SLIP IS GENERAL DELIVERY, RUTLAND, VERMONT! I REPORT TO AUTHORITIES!

IT'S KNOWN THAT SCHLOSS HAS A PASSION FOR MASQUERADE-PARTIES!

AND YOU EXPECT HIM TO SHOW TONIGHT?

BUT HOW DOES THAT EXPLAIN THE FRACAS ON THE STREET?

FOR YEARS NOW, SCHLOSS'S UNDERLINGS HAVE TRACKED HIM... HE LEFT GERMANY WITH MUCH GOLD OF THE NAZI PARTY! THESE MEN WOULD FEAR BATMAN AND ROBIN!

SO THE THUGS YOU TANGLED WITH MAY BE THE COLONEL'S EX-CHUMS!

HEY! WAIT FOR ME--!

NEGATIVE, SON! YOU'RE HURT! YOU NEED REST! STAY PUT... I'LL KEEP YOU POSTED!

I VILL MIX WITH CROWD... SEEK SCHLOSS!

GIVE A HOLLER IF YOU SPOT HIM... A *LOUD* HOLLER!

HI! I'M YOUR HOST... TOM FAGAN!

WHERE'D YOU GET THE *BAT-COSTUME?* IT'S *GREAT*... BETTER THAN *MINE!* AND YOU'VE GOT THE *MUSCLES* TO GO WITH IT!

UH, THANKS! I *EXERCISE* A LOT!

THOSE GLOOMY SORTS STANDING BY THEMSELVES FIT *ROBIN'S* DESCRIPTION OF THE BLACKJACK EXPERTS!

THEY'LL BEAR WATCHING... BUT I DON'T SEE ANY *PIRATES!*

YOU REALLY WRITE COMIC BOOKS, HAH? BOY, IS THAT A *DUMB* WAY TO MAKE A LIVING!

MIND GETTING OFF MY *FOOT?*

I'M DRESSED AS *WEBSLINGER LAD!* HE'S MY *IDOL!*

HMMM... NO ACCOUNTING FOR TASTE!

12

I THINK THESE SUPER-HERO BASHES ARE *NEAT!* DON'T *YOU?*

I'M...UH...*LEARNING* TO LIKE 'EM! WHY DON'T WE GO SOMEWHERE AND *DISCUSS* THE MATTER?

NOTHING TO DO EXCEPT *CIRCULATE* AND HOPE FOR A *BREAK!*

MEANWHILE, OUTSIDE...

MAN, THAT BLINKING RED LIGHT ON TOP OF THE HOUSE IS *COOL!* ALMOST AS COOL AS *FLOATS!*

DO YOU DIG FLOA...*OOH!*

HA-HA-HA-*HALP!*

HALP! THERE'S A S-SKELETON... AND A BODY!

WHERE? SHOW ME--FAST!

LESS THAN A MINUTE LATER...

STABBED IN THE HEART WITH A LONG WIDE BLADE! THE REAPER AGAIN!

SHOULD I CALL THE POLICE?

NO! DON'T SAY A WORD TO ANYONE! JUST HIDE SOMEWHERE!

I WILL! BELIEVE ME... I WILL!

IF NEWS OF THE MURDERS GETS OUT, IT'LL END THE PARTY! AND WE WON'T HAVE A CHANCE OF NABBING SCHLOSS!

AND UNLESS BRUTES LIKE HIM PAY FOR THEIR CRIMES, THE THING WE CALL CIVILIZATION IS A FARCE!

ODD... THE WAY THAT LIGHT IS BLINKING IN A PATTERN!

OF COURSE! SHORT BLINKS FOLLOWED BY LONGER BLINKS... MORSE CODE!

I REMEMBER A FLIGHT OF BACK STAIRS TO THE ROOF...

I'LL SAVE PRECIOUS SECONDS BY AVOIDING THE CROWD IN FRONT!

IN A DARKENED CUPBOARD, HIDDEN FROM *THE BATMAN'S* SIGHT, THERE IS A SUDDEN, FRIGHTENED MOVEMENT...

A PARTY-ER CLAD IN A COLORFUL *PIRATE* GARB STEPS FORTH, HIS GAZE RIVETED ON *THE BATMAN'S* RETREATING BACK...

AT THAT VERY INSTANT, *THE BATMAN'S* HEAD-LONG DASH TAKES HIM TO HIS QUARRY...

EXACTLY WHAT I *EXPECTED* TO SEE! HE'S UNDOUBTEDLY STANDING *GUARD*..

YOU'VE USED YOUR SKULL-SMASHER *ENOUGH!*

HIS *COHORT* WILL BE IN THE CUPOLA ABOVE, SENDING THE *MORSE MESSAGE!*

IS YOU, HANS? I AM FINISHED SHORTLY! RETURN TO YOUR POST!

HUH...? IS NOT HANS! WHOEVER YOU ARE, YOU MUST *DIE!*

BUT BEFORE THE EX-NAZI CAN TRIGGER HIS LUGER, THE LIGHT SWITCHES *OFF*...

SKRAASH

16

THE HOST, TOM FAGAN, RIGGED THIS BLINKER SETUP... ADDS A NICE *SPOOKY* TOUCH TO THE PROCEEDINGS!

THOSE AGING GOOSE-STEPPERS SAW IT AS AN EASY WAY TO *COMMUNICATE!* BUT... COMMUNICATE *WHAT*??

MY WOULD-BE KILLER CAN ANSWER THAT... AND HE *WILL!*

LISTEN TO ME, NAZI... I GIVE YOU A *CHOICE!* YOU CAN *TALK* OR...

I TALK!... I TALK!

I WANT TO KNOW THE *CONTENTS* OF THE MESSAGE YOU WERE SENDING TO YOUR FRIEND IN THE WOODS!

WE SEEK *REVENGE* ON COLONEL SCHLOSS FOR SPENDING NAZI PARTY TREASURES! WE OBSERVE HIM ARRIVING IN RED AUTOMOBILE...

...I INFORM MY FRIEND THAT REVENGE IS *COMPLETE!* WE PUT *BOMB* IN AUTOMOBILE...

THE WHIRR OF AN ENGINE INTERRUPTS THE NAZI'S RECITAL! INSTANTLY, *THE BATMAN* WHIRLS, HIS HANDS ALREADY DARTING TOWARD THE SILKEN ROPE IN HIS BELT...

SCHLOSS! GET OUT OF THERE! RUN...!

HE'S FINALLY... PAID!

BATMAN... YOU OKAY?

OH, SURE! JUST *SWELL*... *GREAT!* THREE MEN SLAIN...

...INCLUDING AN INNOCENT BYSTANDER WHOSE ONLY FAULT WAS WEARING MY COSTUME! YOU TELL HIS *WIDOW*... HIS *ORPHANS*...JUST EXACTLY HOW GREAT I AM!

IT WASN'T YOUR FAULT!

ANYWAY, THE CASE IS *CLOSED*...

DON'T BE *STUPID*, KID! SURE, THE *NAZIS* BOOBY-TRAPPED *SCHLOSS*... BUT THEY HAD NO REASON TO MURDER THE MAN DRESSED AS ME...

...NOR THEIR OWN *COMPANION!*

THEY DIDN'T EVEN KNOW THEIR PAL WAS *DEAD!*

NO, THE *REAPER* IS YET TO BE STOPPED--AND I'VE GOT TO DO IT... *ALONE!*

I'VE NEVER HAD A TASK I HATED MORE...

19

GRIMLY, *THE BATMAN* SEARCHES, PASSING AMONG THE WORN REMNANTS OF THE PARTY...

HE'S NOT ANYWHERE IN THE HOUSE... HIS CAR IS STILL PARKED ON THE ROAD OUT FRONT...

HE MUST HAVE GONE ACROSS THE FIELD... TOWARD THE STREAM-- THE SITE OF HIS FIRST KILLING...

IT IS DAWN... THE LONG NIGHT IS GONE! MIST RISES FROM THE ETERNAL EARTH, CHILL AND ENVELOPING AS THE MEMORY OF OLD GRIEF! SLOWLY, *THE BATMAN* STALKS HIS QUARRY...

AT LAST HE EMERGES FROM THE WOODS, AND FACES THE TAKER OF LIVES! WHEN HE SPEAKS, THERE IS NO TRIUMPH IN HIS VOICE...

YOU CAN'T RUN ANY FARTHER! YOU CAN'T ESCAPE... FROM ME-- OR YOURSELF!

THEN... YOU *HAVE* GUESSED MY *IDENTITY*?

20

OF COURSE! THOSE NAZIS CHASING SCHLOSS--THEY *COULDN'T* HAVE KNOWN I WAS AROUND--UNLESS *YOU* TOLD THEM!

YES! AFTER YOU INFORMED ON SCHLOSS, YOU HAD A CHANGE OF HEART... YOU DECIDED ON *PERSONAL* VENGEANCE!

AND HAVE YOU ALSO GUESSED *WHY* I TOLD THEM?

AND WHO HAS *BETTER* RIGHT? MY FATHER AND MOTHER, MY SISTERS... I SAW THE *BUTCHER* EMPTY HIS PISTOL INTO THEIR BODIES...

I HEARD HIM *LAUGH* AS THEIR BLOOD POURED ONTO THE FILTH OF THE CAMP!

WHO ARE *YOU* TO JUDGE ME? YOU--WHO HAVE NOT WITNESSED THE *HORROR* OF THOSE DAYS!

STILL, I AWAKE FROM SLEEP *SCREAMING!* I FEEL THE *AGONIES*... SMELL THE SMOKE OF THE *EXECUTION* CHAMBER... LISTEN TO THE HELPLESS CRYING OF BABIES...

21

TRUE, I HAVE NO RIGHT TO JUDGE! NEITHER HAVE *YOU!*

THERE'S NOT ENOUGH WATER IN THAT STREAM TO WASH THE GUILT FROM *ANYONE* WHO PRESUMES TO TAKE THE LIFE OF ANOTHER--!

BAH! THIS IS *NONSENSE!* FOR TWENTY-FIVE YEARS, I HAVE BORNE THE BURDEN OF MY SORROW--

NOW I AM *FREE!* I SHALL *REMAIN* FREE!

YOU WON'T STOP ME!

SWOOSHHHH

DOCTOR... I DON'T WANT TO *FIGHT*...

...TO *HURT*-- *AAGH!*

HE'S STRONG... WITH THE STRENGTH OF *MADNESS!* SOMETHING IN ME *WANTS* TO LET HIM GO! IN HIM, I SEE SOME OF *MYSELF!*

LIKE HIM, I LOST PARENTS TO EVIL... NO! *HIS WAY IS WRONG!*

I'M TELLIN' YA, IT'S TRUE. IT WAS *DEATH*... HE HAD A GIANT SICKLE AND HE WAS ALL BONES...

C'MON, ALAN, YOU'VE BEEN HALF-BAGGED ALL NIGHT! YOU'RE JUST...

NO...NO! NOW, LISTEN, I SAW IT... I *SWEAR!* THIS *DEATH* GUY ATTACKED ME, AND THEN *BATMAN* JUMPS OUT OF *NOWHERE*...

...AND... *HEY*... GUYS! WHAT'S UP... ALL OF A SUDDEN YOU *BELIEVE* ME?...

HEY, C'MON... THE STORY'S NOT *THAT* SCARY!

GET OUT OF MY WAY-- FOOL!

I--SAID--GET-OUT-OF--MY WAY!!

--HEY... GIMME A CHANCE-- OOMPH

YOU SWINE... MOVE! HE'S COMING!-- MOVE, MOVE!!

I WARNED YOU....!

PLEASE-- MISTER... FOR GOD'S SAKE...

W-WHAT HAVE I BECOME?

HEY-- MISTER... WATCH IT!

DOCTOR!... DON'T STEP BACK...

DOCTOR..

CHUK

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NO, HE'S LYING! THERE IS NO DEMON IN ME!

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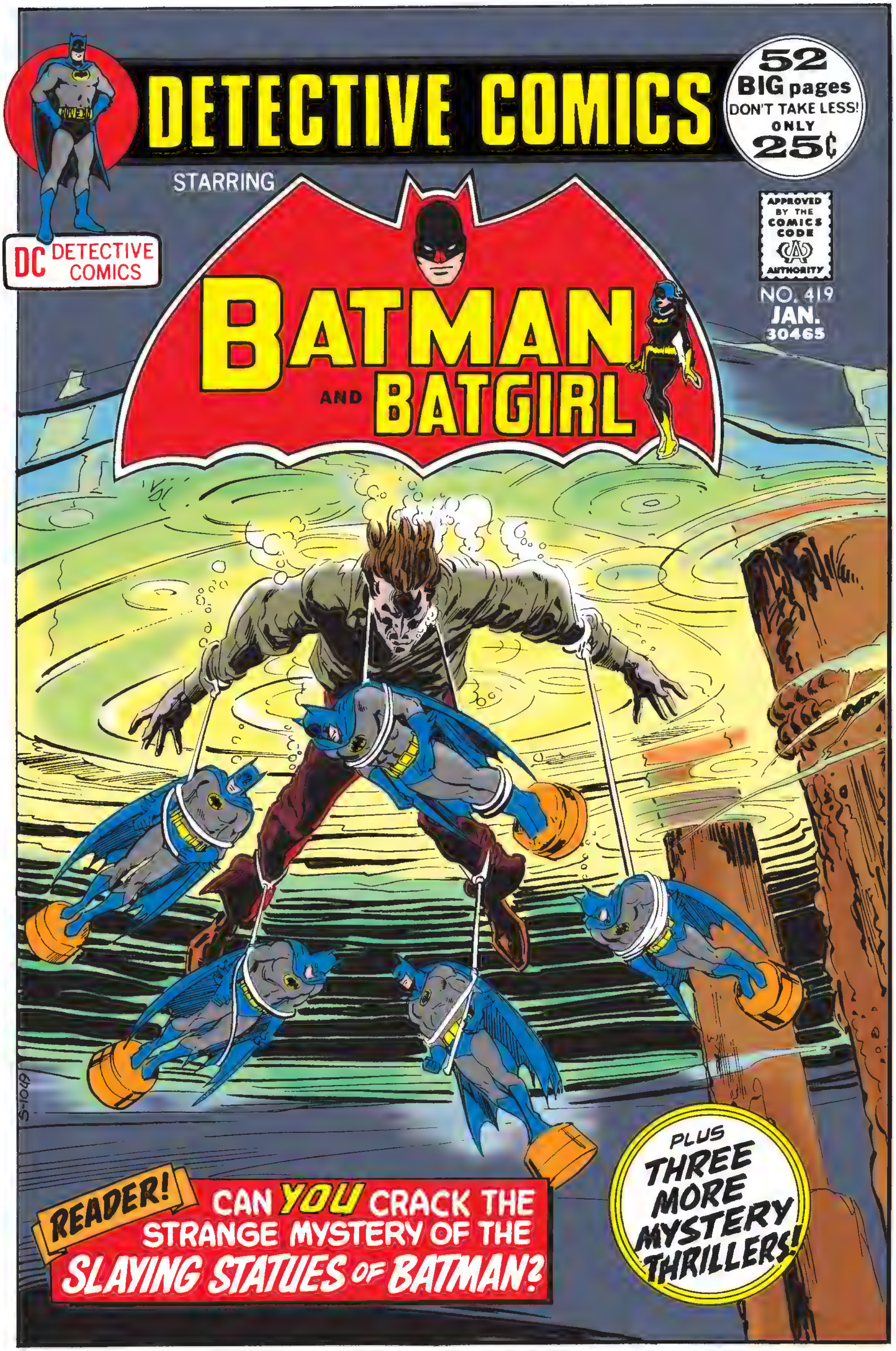
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YOU KEPT THE KILLER FROM GETTING AT ME, BATMAN!
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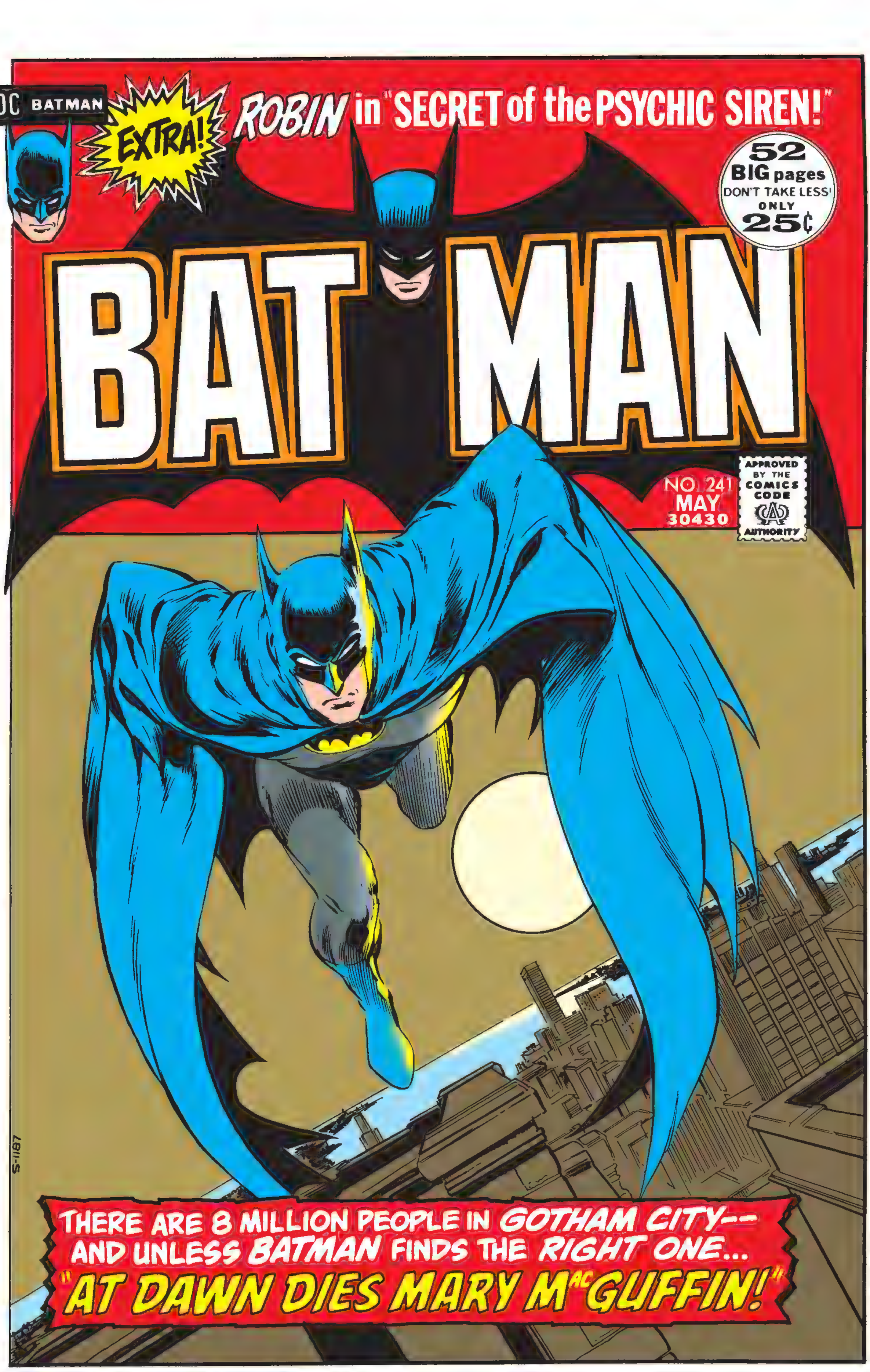

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UP, UP... AND AWAY!

WHAT'S HAPPENING TO ME? I CAN'T FLY ANY MORE!

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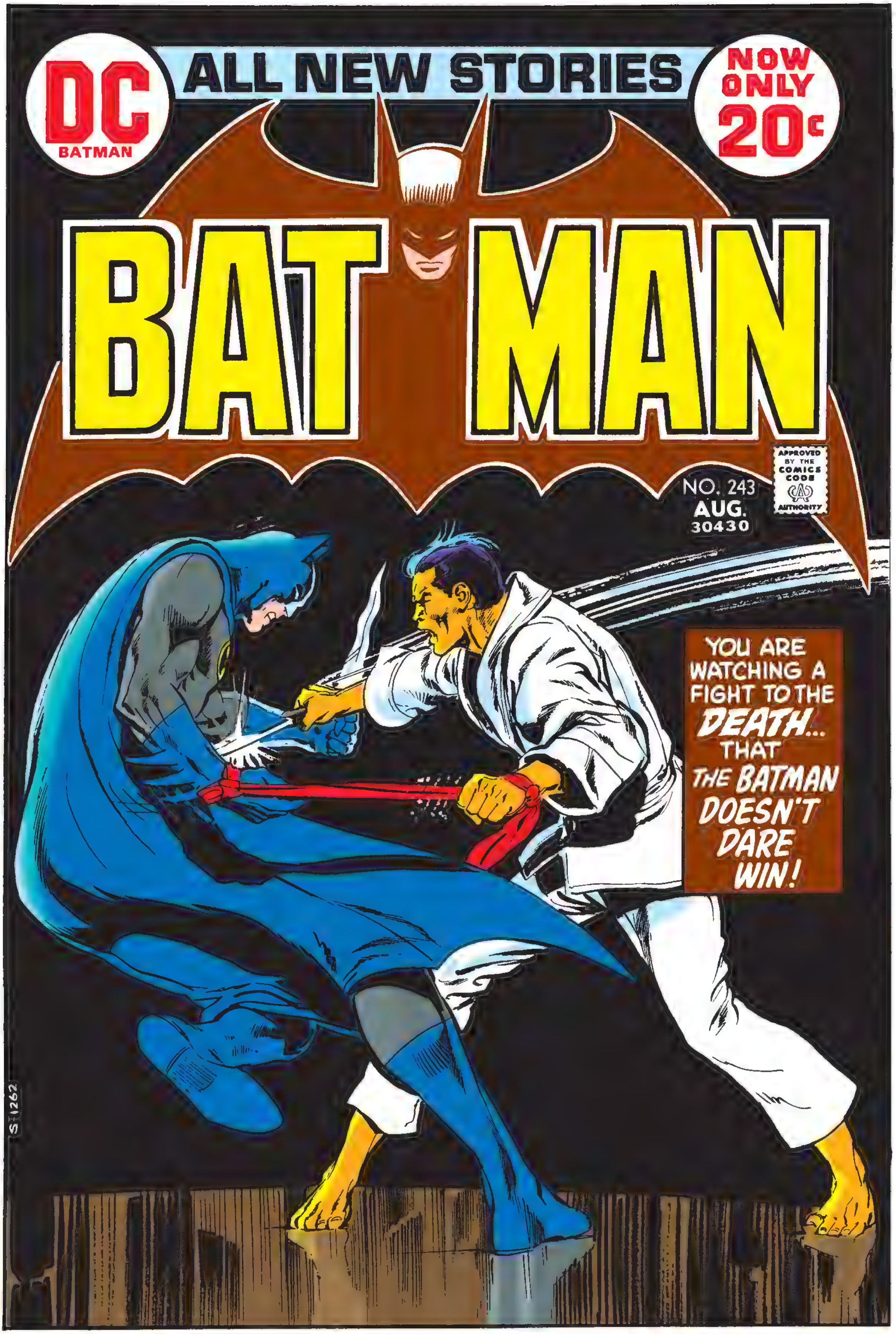
THE BUREAU of MISSING VILLAINS BRINGS BACK THE GOLDEN AGE HARLEQUIN!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YOU ARE WATCHING A FIGHT TO THE DEATH... THAT THE BATMAN DOESN'T DARE WIN!
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"THE LAZARUS PIT!"

TWO MEN-- EACH HIGHLY TRAINED IN THE FIGHTING ARTS, EACH SUPERBLY CONDITIONED-- FACE EACH OTHER IN WHAT PROMISES TO BE A DUEL TO THE ***DEATH!***

AND THIS IS ONLY THE ***BEGINNING*** OF AN ADVENTURE TO ***SHOCK***...TO ***STUN***--TO PRESENT ***INSURMOUNTABLE*** CHALLENGES TO THE DREAD...

BATMAN

STORY: *DENNY O'NEIL*
PENCILS: *NEAL ADAMS*
INKS: *DICK GIORDANO*
EDITOR: *JULIUS SCHWARTZ*

THERE IS ONLY ***ONE WAY*** TO SETTLE OUR DIFFERENCES, FRIEND ***BATMAN***--

--TO SETTLE THEM WITH ***HONOR***-- ***MORTAL COMBAT!***

IF YOU ***INSIST, LING***--

HEY... BEFORE YOU START *CARVING*... MIND TELLING ME THE *BEEF?* I THOUGHT YOU GUYS *LIKED* ONE ANOTHER!

NOT EXACTLY *LIKE, MATCHES*... MORE *RESPECT!*

I WILL *EXPLAIN,* GANGSTER -- MOST *BRIEFLY!*

SNIK

THE BATMAN SAVED MY *LIFE!* ACCORDING TO THE CUSTOMS OF MY PEOPLE, I AM THUS HIS TO *COMMAND!* I OWE HIM *LOYALTY--*

--AND HE ASKS I *PAY* HIM MY DEBT BY HELPING CAPTURE *RĀS AL GHŪL!*

HOWEVER, *RĀS ALSO* ONCE RESCUED ME FROM MORTAL PERIL! HENCE, MY LOYALTIES ARE *DIVIDED!*

THIS DILEMMA CAN BE SETTLED ONLY WITH *BLOOD* --THE *BATMAN'S*...

...OR *MINE!*

SOUNDS *DUMB* TO ME! BUT WHATTA *I* KNOW... I'M ONLY A WATERFRONT *HIT-MAN!*

OKAY, I'LL GIVE YOU THE SIGNAL--WHEN I STRIKE MY NEXT MATCH...

GO!

2

I'M AT A *DISADVANTAGE*... A *DOUBLE* DISADVANTAGE! *LING* IS *USED* TO FIGHTING WITH *STEEL*...

AND HE HAS NO OBJECTION TO *KILLING!*

HAVING MY ARM BOUND TO HIS CRAMPS MY *STYLE*-- *BADLY!*

SO THE *FIRST* ORDER OF BUSINESS IS TO CUT MYSELF *FREE!*

YOU ABANDON YOUR *BLADE*--?

IT WAS... *DISTRACTING* ME! BUT DON'T FEEL OBLIGATED TO DO *LIKEWISE!*

I WON'T!

YOU HAVE... *AMAZING* CUNNING! *UNNGH...*

I HAVE *YEARS* OF PRACTICE IN *JUDO*--

EITHER THE *KNIFE* GOES...OR YOUR *ARM* DOES!

SENSIBLE *CHOICE, LING!*

3

A GOOD HARD *THUMP* AGAINST THE WALL WILL MAKE HIM *GROGGY*--

--WHERE I CAN *FINISH* OUR LITTLE EXERCISE WITH NO MORE DAMAGE THAN A COUPLE OF *BRUISES!*

UH-OH! THAT *THUMP* WASN'T HARD *ENOUGH*-- *'OOFFFFF!*

...NOW *I'M* THE ONE WHO'S *GROGGY!*

LING IS RUNNING TRUE TO FORM... TRYING FOR HIS *WEAPON!*

HE'S *GOT* IT! --NOTHING I CAN DO... EXCEPT *WAIT!*

4

FOR THESE TWO, THERE IS NO TIME, NO PLACE...ONLY BREATH EXPLODING FROM CLENCHED TEETH...

...THE AWFUL PAIN OF MUSCLE STRAINED TO THE VERY *LIMIT,* AND THE STENCH OF THE *GRIMMEST* OF STRUGGLES...

IT HAS TAKEN EXACTLY *FOUR SECONDS*...AND A *LIFETIME!*

TWICE YOU SPARED ME! BATMAN... I AM YOUR SERVANT--FOREVER!

SAVE IT, LING! I'M NOT INTERESTED IN THANKS!

JUST SEE THAT YOU KEEP YOUR PART OF THE BARGAIN--!

MEET ME AT THE AIRFIELD TOMORROW MORNING AT EIGHT!

AS I AM HONORABLE-- I SHALL BE THERE!

I WISH YOU HADN'T TAKEN SO LONG TO CLOBBER HIM! I WAS WORRIED FOR A WHILE!

MAKES A PAIR OF US, CHUM!

BETTER PEEL YOURSELF OUT OF THE DISGUISE!

SHUCKS... I WAS ENJOYING BEING AS BIG AS YOU!

THIS INFLATABLE BODY STOCKING YOU INVENTED IS FAR OUT!

I HATE TO SPOIL YOUR FUN, ROBIN-- BUT IT'S MY TURN TO ASSUME MATCHES MALONE'S IDENTITY!

HEY-- CAN YOU EXPLAIN WHAT'S HAPPENING?

I'M PUZZLED... YOU FAKE THE DEATH OF BRUCE WAYNE IN A PLANE-CRASH--

--AND YOU STAGE A CHARADE! DOESN'T MAKE SENSE!

6

IT'S NOT WORTH WORRYING ABOUT, KID! JUST A SMALL-POTATOES CAPER I CAN HANDLE SOLO-- WITH NO STRAIN!

YOU'D BETTER BE HEADING BACK TOWARD HUDSON UNIVERSITY!

THANKS FOR THE PLAY-ACTING! UNTIL THE END OF THE SEMESTER--SO LONG!

'BYE,,, AND *LUCK!*

I DON'T *DARE* TELL *ROBIN* THE *TRUTH*--

--THAT I'M GOING AFTER THE *MOST DANGEROUS CRIMINAL GENIUS* I'VE EVER MET,,,

--OR *HEARD* OF!--*RĀ's AL GHŪL!*

HE'D INSIST ON COMING *ALONG!* AND I DON'T WANT TO PUT *HIS* NECK ON THE CHOPPING BLOCK WITH *MINE*--

IF I DON'T...*SURVIVE*...IT'LL BE UP TO *ROBIN* TO CARRY ON THE TRADITION OF *THE BATMAN!*

MAYBE I'M OVERLY *PROUD*...IN FEELING IT'S A *GOOD* TRADITION!

PRECISELY EIGHT HOURS LATER, THREE MEN ASSEMBLE ON THE WIND-CHILLED FLIGHT-LINE OF A PRIVATE AIRFIELD SOMEWHERE SOUTH OF *GOTHAM CITY*...

I AM TO TRAVEL ON A *PRIVATE AIRCRAFT?* HOW DIFFERENT FROM THE CONVEYANCES OF MY *ANCESTORS*...

WHEN YA WORK FOR *THE BATMAN,* YA ALWAYS GO IN *STYLE!*

SPEAKING OF OUR MYSTERIOUS LEADER... WHERE *IS* HE?

OH, HE'S WITH US, DOCTOR BLAINE!

WHERE--?

IN *SPIRIT*, HE'S WITH US, GOOD BUDDY!

MAY I ASK OUR *DESTINATION?*

MY INFORMANTS TELL ME *RÄS* IS AT HIS *CHALET* IN THE *SWISS ALPS!*

YOU LOOK LIKE YA GOT A *RANCID PICKLE* STUCK IN YOUR CRAW, BLAINE!

ANY *COMPLAINTS?*

YES! I AM A *SCIENTIST,* ENGAGED IN *VITAL RESEARCH!*

CRIME-FIGHTING IS A *WASTE* OF MY *TALENT* ...MY *TRAINING!*

DON'T *SWEAT* IT, PALLY! YOU AIN'T GONNA BE RISKIN' YOUR HIDE--

--YOU'RE ALONG IN CASE *RASSY*-BABY SPRINGS A SCIENTIFIC-TYPE *SURPRISE!*

THE BOSS SAYS YOU KEEP IN THE BACK-GROUND...LET ME AN' *LING* HANDLE THE *ACTION!*

ELEVEN HOURS AND NEARLY 4,500 MILES LATER, THE PLANE TOUCHES DOWN IN *SWITZERLAND...*

8

SOON, PASSING THROUGH *CUSTOMS*...

YOU GUYS CHECK IN THE HOTEL! I'M GONNA LOOK UP A *PAL!* WE ONCE SHARED A *CELL!*

MEET YA FOR *EATS!*

A *CHARMING* AVENUE! I'VE HEARD IT SAID THE *SWISS* ARE THE MOST *CIVILIZED*--

LOOK!-- IN THE *CROWD!* IT IS *TALIA*... *DAUGHTER* OF THE *HEAD DEMON, RĀS!*

I SHALL PLEASE *THE BATMAN* BY *CAPTURING* HER!

WAIT!

LING! -- ALLY OF MY *FATHER!*

NO *LONGER!* I SERVE HIS *ENEMY!*

...THE BATM-NNGH!

STAND *ASIDE,* FOOLS! MY MASTER'S CHILD WOULD HAVE *PASSAGE!*

YOU'RE NOT BEING *POLITE, UBU!*

THE BATMAN--!

IT'S BEEN *MONTHS* SINCE I SAW YOU, *FATSO!**

CAN'T SAY I'VE *MISSED* YOU, THOUGH!

*NOTE: THE *COWLED CRUSADER* MET--AND MASTERED--*UBU* IN *BATMAN #232!*

I HAVEN'T TIME TO *SPAR* WITH YOU THIS TRIP--

--NOT THAT THE OUTCOME WOULD BE ANY DIFFERENT FROM OUR *LAST* FRACAS!

THUD

OWNGH!

HOLD IT, *TALIA!*

DARLING! I WOULDN'T TRY TO RUN FROM MY *BATMAN!*

ON THE *CONTRARY*-- IT IS *I* WHO CHASE *YOU! REMEMBER--?!*

SWEET TALK WILL GET YOU *ZERO*--

FLAK

UNNGH!

10

YOU...YOU MASKED BULLY! MANHANDLING A DEFENSELESS GIRL--

EASY, MISS! YOU MISUNDERSTAND!

AAAGH!

I MASH THE FACE TO JELLY--

NO, UBU!

WE MUST INFORM YOUR MASTER--MY FATHER!

COME-- TO THE AUTO-MOBILE!

GOSH! I'LL BET I GOOFED!

YOU OKAY?

MY BODY WILL RECOVER QUICKLY! MY PRIDE WILL TAKE A BIT LONGER!

I'LL FIND A DOCTOR!

NO... WE'VE GOT TO MOVE FAST-- IN RĀS AL GHŪL'S DIRECTION!

--SO WE CAN'T AFFORD TO WASTE A SECOND!

TALIA AND UBU WILL TELL HIM WE'RE HERE--

DID YOU SAY... RĀS AL GHŪL?

HE DID!

THAT... MONSTER! THAT ROTTEN... LYING...

YOU KNOW HIM?

SOMEONE I USED TO... LOVE... KNEW HIM! A MAN I WAS ENGAGED TO--! THE DEMON USED HIM... AND THEN DISCARDED HIM LIKE... GARBAGE!

MY FIANCÉ NEVER RECOVERED! HE'S BECOME A PIECE OF HUMAN FLOTSAM... HIDING INSIDE A BOTTLE!

FROM WHAT YOU'VE SAID, I GATHER YOU'RE PLANNING TO NAIL HIM! WELL... I'M ON YOUR SIDE!

I CAN'T ALLOW YOU TO RISK...

MISTER-- YOU JUST TRY TO STOP ME! I CAN BE AN EXTREMELY STUBBORN LADY!

SO I'VE HEARD... MOLLY!

HOW'D YOU KNOW MY NAME?

I READ THE SPORTS PAGES... I'VE SEEN STORIES ABOUT MOLLY POST-- INTERNATIONAL SKI CHAMPION!

12

THE *BATMAN* ISN'T EXACTLY A *STRANGER* TO THE NEWSPAPERS, EITHER!

WE'LL EXCHANGE COMPLIMENTS *LATER*, MOLLY! UNLESS I MISREAD *LING*, WE'VE *ARRIVED!*

YES! LOOK--

IT IS *RĀ'S AL GHUL'S* PRIVATE *CABLE CAR!*

BY THIS-- AND *NOTHING ELSE*-- CAN ONE REACH HIS MOUNTAIN RETREAT!

WE MUST CONCEIVE A *SCHEME* FOR GETTING *CONTROL* OF THE CAR--

UH-UH... *TALIA* MAY HAVE *ALREADY* WARNED HER FATHER!

WE'VE GOT TO MAKE OUR MOVE *NOW!*

DIRECT ACTION IS CALLED FOR, *LING!*

--LET'S *GO!*

YOU *DO* ENJOY USING YOUR FISTS, DON'T YOU?

AS A MATTER OF FACT, BLAINE... *NO!*--

--BUT THIS ISN'T THE PLACE TO DISCUSS MY *METHODS!*

YOU AND MOLLY ARE ABOUT THE SIZE OF RĀS'S MEN...

...PUT THESE ON! KEEP YOUR FACES HIDDEN AND WE JUST *MIGHT* FOOL RĀS'S LOOKOUTS!

AND *YOU* GUYS?

WE'LL BE WITH YOU-- *BELIEVE* IT!

THUS, WITHIN *MINUTES*...

THE *CABLE CAR* APPROACHES!

THE MASTER CAUTIONS THERE MAY BE *TREACHERY!*

OUR ORDERS ARE TO EXAMINE IT *CAREFULLY--!*

I OBSERVE NOTHING OUT OF THE *ORDINARY!*

THE CONVEYANCE CONTAINS NAUGHT SAVE THE *SUPPLIES--*

--AND THE MASTER'S *SLAVES!* WE HAVE NO CAUSE FOR *ALARM!*

14

WE ARE *DECEIVED!* THESE ARE NOT OUR *MATES--!*

BRATA TAT

THEY ARE *IMPOSTORS... AGGH!*

WE MOVE AS *ONE BEING, BATMAN!* SURELY NO FINER FIGHTERS *EXIST!*

DON'T LET'S CONGRAT- ULATE OURSELVES *YET, LING!* THAT GUARD GOT OFF A COUPLE OF *SHOTS--*

...UNDOUBT- EDLY ALERTING *RĀS* AND COMPANY!

BATMAN! --DUCK!

SPANG SPANG SPANG

BRA TATA TAK

BEEOW TZING VIP SPANG VIP VIP

I HAPPENED TO GLANCE AROUND--AND SAW THE SUN GLINTING ON A *MACHINE GUN--*

--ABOVE US,,, ON TOP OF THE *SLOPE!*

BRATATAT

TATATATATAK

IT'S IN A CONCRETE BUNKER... A RELIC OF WORLD WAR TWO--

--IT WOULD TAKE A MORTAR TO KNOCK THEM OUT--

SPANG VIIP TZING

SEEANG

--AND WE DON'T HAVE SO MUCH AS A BEAN-SHOOTER!

WE MAY HAVE SOMETHING BETTER, MISS POST!--THIS!

YOU WILL BEST THE FIREARM BY THROWING A ROCK AT IT, ESTEEMED SCIENTIST?

NOT A ROCK, LING! A BAR OF SODIUM-19!

I FOUND IT WHILE WE WERE RIDING UP HERE, IN ONE OF THESE CRATES!

ORDINARY SODIUM REACTS VIOLENTLY WITH WATER! THE SODIUM-19 ISOTOPE...

BRATTATATAT

...WELL, I CAN DEMON-STRATE EASIER THAN I CAN EXPLAIN!

I USED TO THROW A PRETTY MEAN JAVELIN IN COLLEGE--!

SPANG SPANG VIIP

AND THE BAR IS THE RIGHT WEIGHT...

16

SUK

TAKKATAK... KATAKATAK

I OUGHT TO BE ABLE TO LAND IT DIRECTLY IN FRONT OF THE BUNKER...

THE WET SNOW WILL TOUCH THE METAL...

HOLD YOUR *EARS..!*

KA-WHOOOOM

HEY, BUDDY...YOUR SCIENTIFIC SAVVY GOT US CLEAR OF A REAL *PICKLE!*

WE ARE *FORTUNATE RĀS* REQUIRED SUCH AN *EXPLOSIVE* SUBSTANCE!

THE MACHINE GUNNERS WILL *SURVIVE*, I IMAGINE!

BUT THEY'LL BE A WHILE RECOVERING FROM THE *SHOCK-WAVE!*

17

I WONDER WHAT *USE* HE INTENDED FOR THE *SODIUM-19?*

THE ANSWER LIES *THAT* WAY...!

YOU CAN *COME*--OR *STAY!*

LIKE I SAID IN TOWN... I'M *COMING*-- *ALL THE WAY!*

I'M RUNNING NEARLY FLAT OUT... AND YOU ARE HAVING NO TROUBLE *MATCHING* MY SPEED!

I'M *IMPRESSED!*

MISTER--YOU DON'T WIN THE CHAMPIONSHIPS *I'VE* WON BY LOUNGING IN THE SACK READING MOVIE MAGS AND MUNCHING *CHOCOLATES!*

I BLUSHINGLY ADMIT I'M IN *GREAT* CONDITION!

SHE'S A GOOD WOMAN... AS **BLAINE** IS A GOOD MAN! EVEN *LING* HAS A KIND OF RAW NOBILITY...

...I *HATE* RISKING THEIR LIVES! FOR ANY *LESSER* CAUSE, I *WOULDN'T!*

BUT *RĀS AL GHŪL* IS LIKE THE MOUNTAINS AND DESERTS HE FAVORS... *SAVAGE-- MERCILESS!*

HE *MUST* BE STOPPED!

18

THIS IS UNDOUBTEDLY THE *ENTRANCE* TO THE *DEMON'S* LAIR!

UNGUARDED? NOT *LIKELY!*

IT *WAS* GUARDED-- BY THOSE WE *DEFEATED!*

LING HAS A *POINT!* WE *MAY* BE STANDING NEAR A *TRAP!*

THAT'S WHY *I* AM GOING *FIRST!*

--AND *ALONE!*

KRAK

BE *CAREFUL!*

THE *BATMAN!*

YOU *NEVER* TIRE OF GASPING MY NAME, HUH, *UBU?*

A FEW HOURS AGO, YOU PUT YOUR FOOT IN MY FACE!

I'M ABOUT TO RETURN THE *FAVOR--*

CHNNK!!

--DOUBLE!

HE'LL SLEEP THE SLEEP OF THE FAT, UGLY AND STUPID...

BATMAN! BEHIND YOU!

IT'S DAUGHTER TALIA!

SHE WAS TIPPY-TOEING TOWARD YOU!

I'M BETTING HER PRETTY HEAD IS LOADED WITH PURE *NASTY!*

ON THE *CONTRARY!* I MEAN MY DARLING *BATMAN* NO *HARM*--

I MEANT ONLY TO... *GREET* HIM!

YOUR LIPS ARE *WARM,* AS ALWAYS!--AND AS ALWAYS, THEY *CHILL* ME... TO THE *MARROW!*

I'D SOONER BE PECKED BY A *RATTLESNAKE!*

I DON'T SUPPOSE YOU'RE WILLING TO TELL WHERE YOUR *FATHER* IS?

GLADLY, DARLING! HE IS *PRESENT*--

20

TO BE *PRECISE*... HIS *BODY* IS PRESENT! HIS *SOUL*... HAS *DEPARTED!*

RĀS AL GHŪL IS... *DEAD?!*

QUITE DEAD! YOU MAY *TEST* HIS CONDITION, IF YOU WISH!

I'LL DO THAT--

NO QUESTION OF IT, *BATMAN!* HE'S LIFELESS AS STONE!

YOU DON'T SEEM *SORRY, TALIA!*

I AM NOT! HE HAD A LONG, EVENTFUL LIFE... *SEVERAL* LONG LIVES!

YOU WANT TO TAKE ME TO YOUR SILLY *POLICE,* DARLING? I SHALL BE *DELIGHTED* TO ACCOMPANY YOU!

AS *TALIA'S* SILKEN VOICE FILLS THE ASTONISHED SILENCE, HER FINGER TOUCHES A HIDDEN STUD...

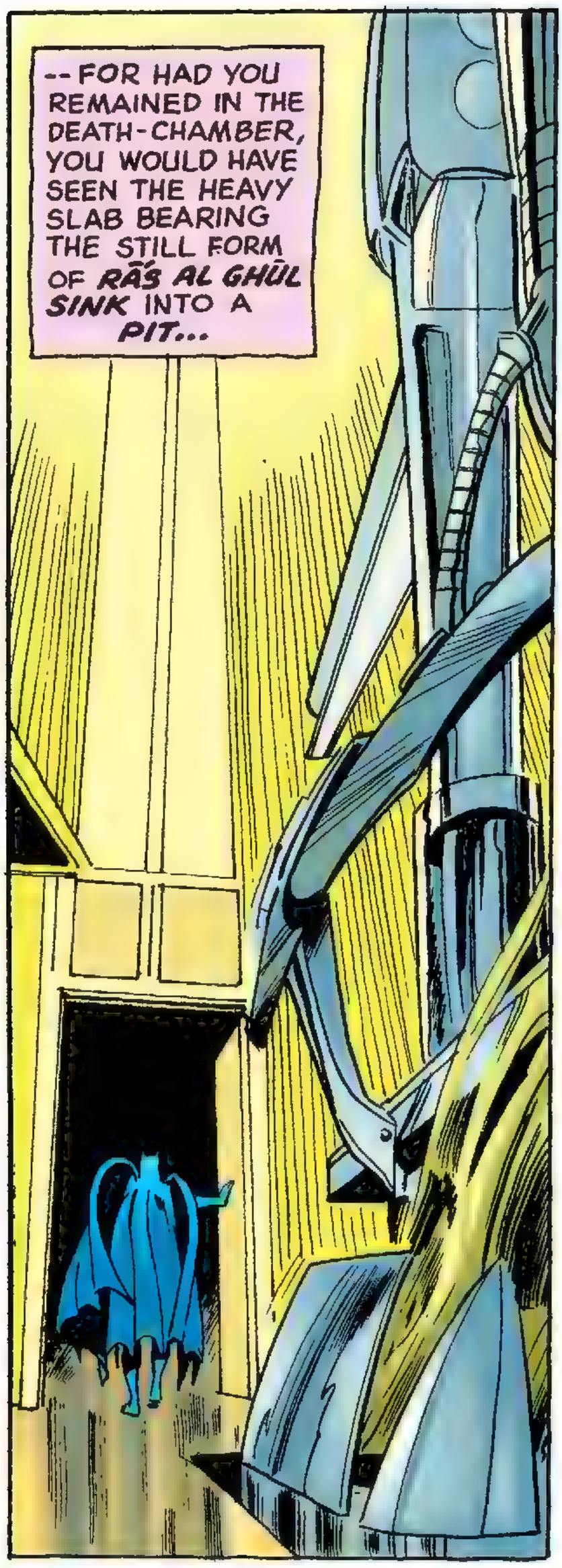
THE JOURNEY TO CIVILIZATION WILL BE *MOST* ENJOYABLE-- IN YOUR COMPANY!

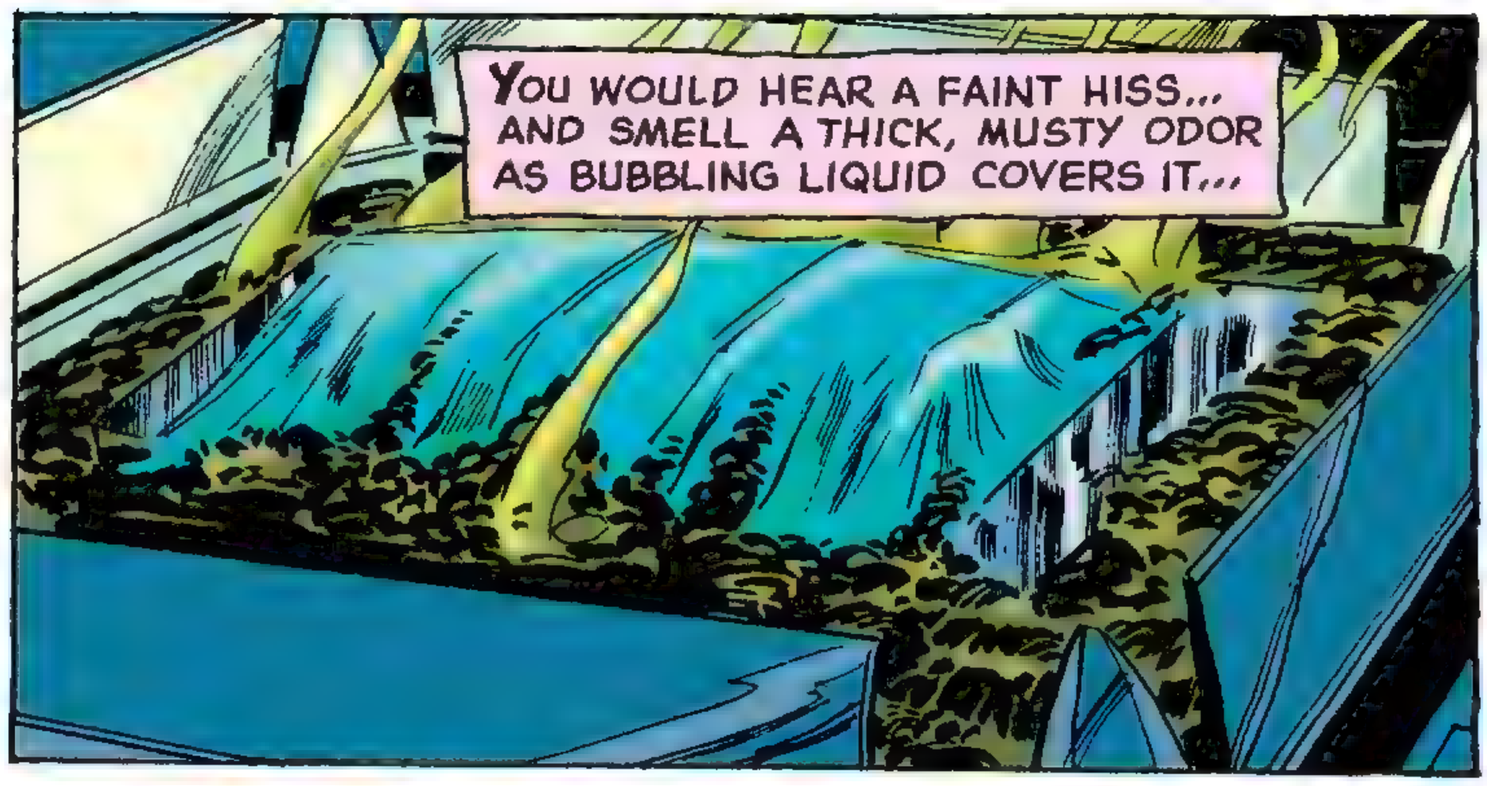
I'LL BET YOU'LL GET BIG KICKS FROM *JAIL,* TOO!

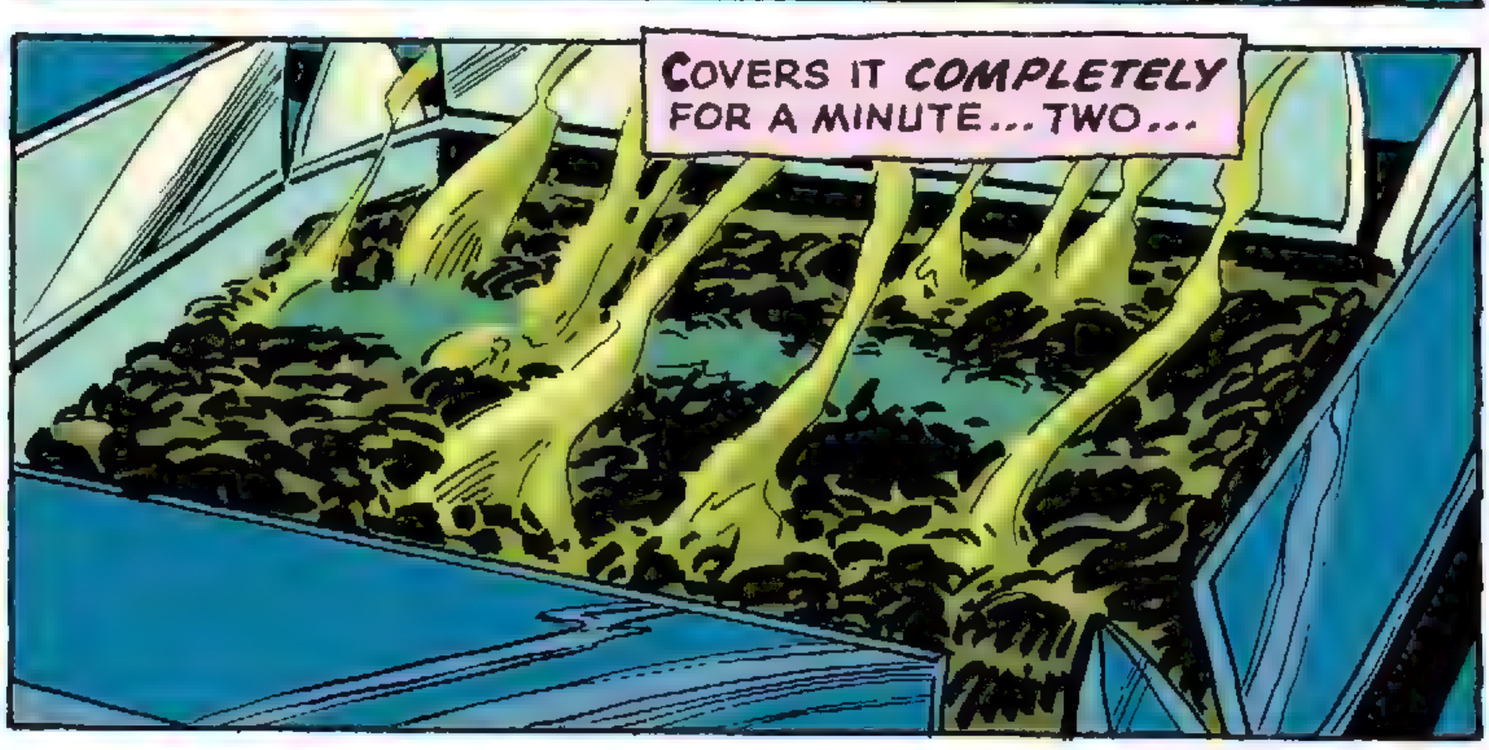
NO...OUR JOB IS *FINISHED!*

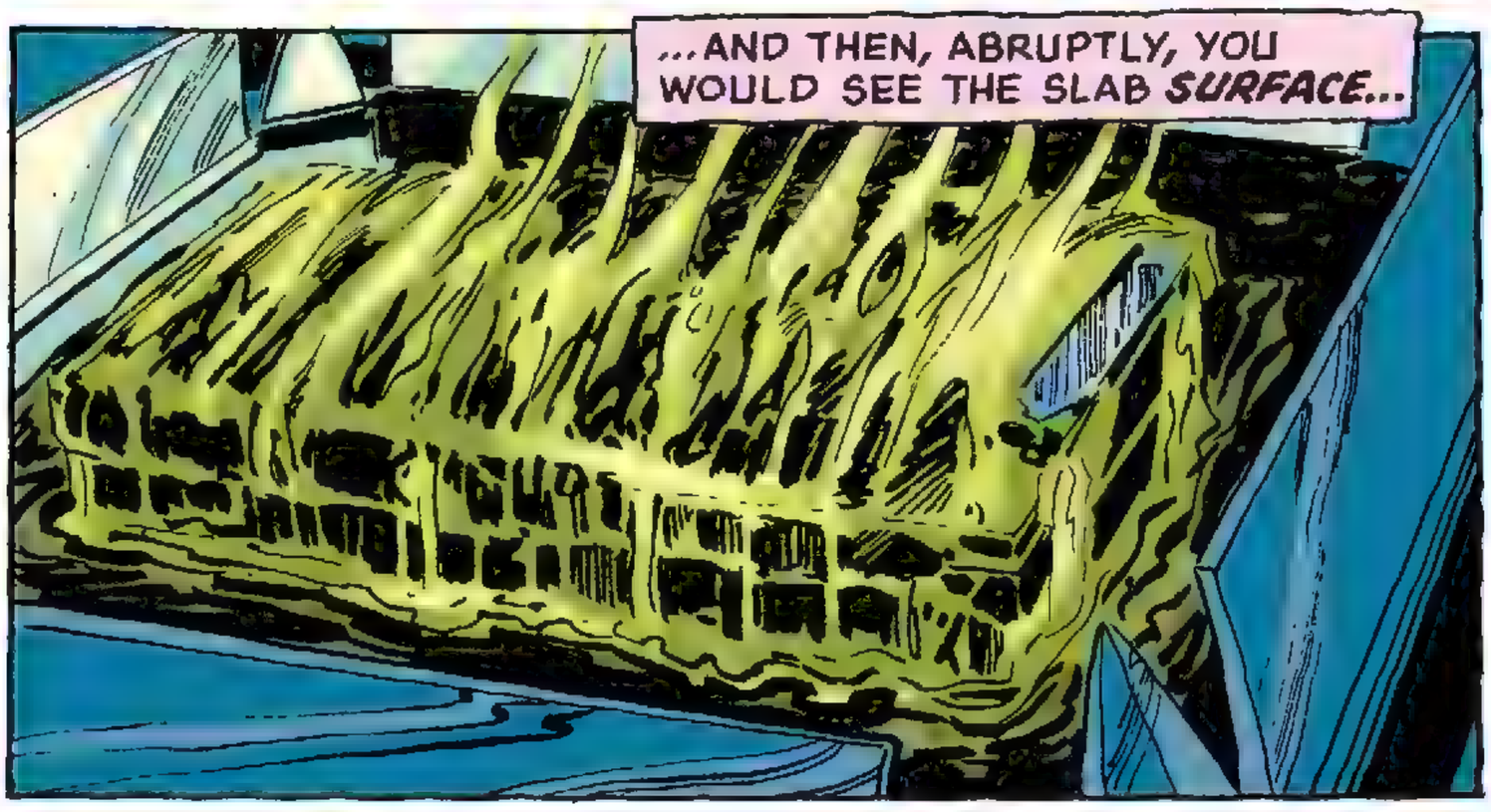
ANY *MORE* CHORES, *BATMAN?*

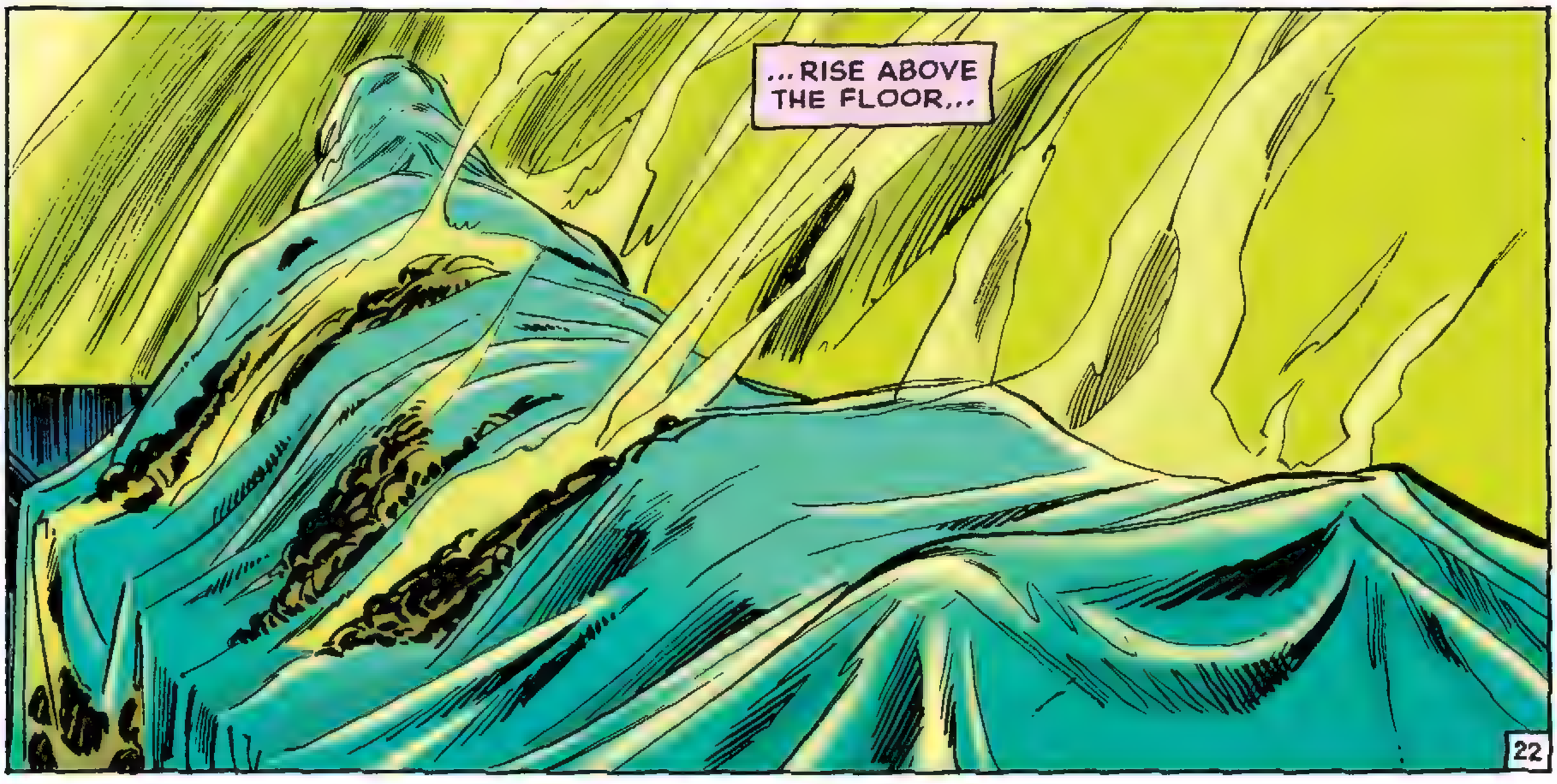
NOT TRUE, BATMAN--


--FOR HAD YOU REMAINED IN THE DEATH-CHAMBER, YOU WOULD HAVE SEEN THE HEAVY SLAB BEARING THE STILL FORM OF RĀS AL GHŪL SINK INTO A PIT...


YOU WOULD HEAR A FAINT HISS... AND SMELL A THICK, MUSTY ODOR AS BUBBLING LIQUID COVERS IT...


COVERS IT COMPLETELY FOR A MINUTE... TWO...


...AND THEN, ABRUPTLY, YOU WOULD SEE THE SLAB SURFACE...

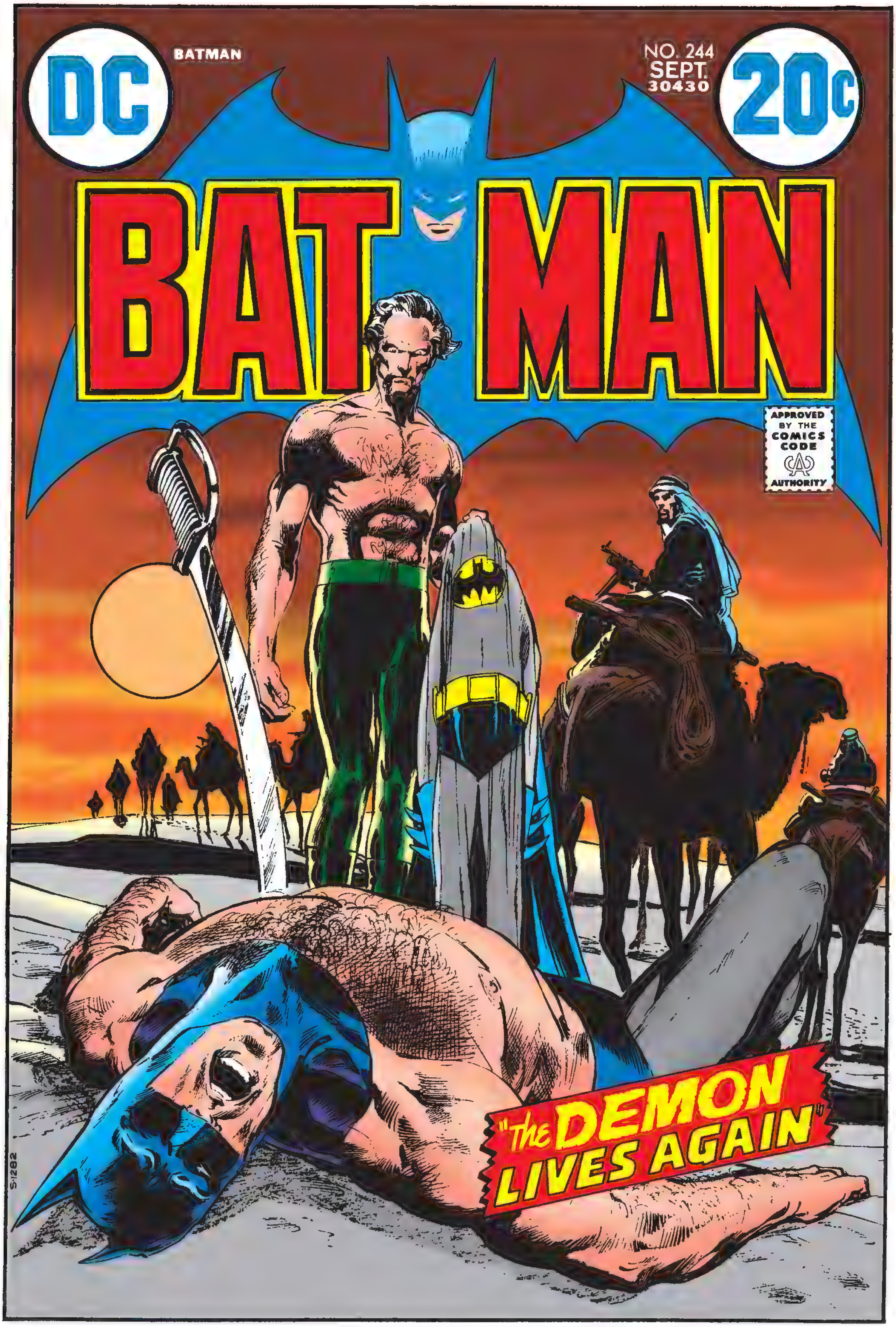

...RISE ABOVE THE FLOOR...
22

...BEARING A MODERN-DAY LAZARUS ARISEN FROM THE DEAD...

--A MIRTHLESS, INSANE JOY GLITTERING IN HIS EYES!

23

THE RUTHLESS CONFLICT BETWEEN THE *DEMON* AND THE *BATMAN* CONCLUDES IN *NEXT ISSUE'S* "THE DEMON LIVES AGAIN!"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BAT MAN
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
"The DEMON LIVES AGAIN"
S-1282

HEREWITH... ANOTHER INCREDIBLE CHAPTER IN THE LIFE OF THE *WORLD'S GREATEST CRIME-FIGHTER...*

BATMAN

THE DEMON LIVES AGAIN!!

COME TO A *CHALET* NESTLED HIGH IN THE *SWISS ALPS*... FEEL THE CLEAN BITE OF WINTER AND LISTEN TO A DISTANT SCREAM OF WIND IN ENDLESS CREVICES...

HERE *THE BATMAN* AND HIS COMPANIONS HAVE CAPTURED *TALIA*, DAUGHTER OF ARCH-CRIMINAL *RĀS AL GHŪL*...

HERE, *ALSO*, THEY WATCHED *RĀS* HIMSELF *DIE*... THEY *THOUGHT!*

BUT *NOW*, A POWERFUL FIGURE LEAPS TOWARD THEM, A SNARL IN HIS THROAT AND BLOOD-LUST GLITTERING IN HIS EYES--

S-1280

STORY BY: DENNY O' NEIL

ART BY: NEAL ADAMS & DICK GIORDANO

MINUTES EARLIER, *RĀS'S* DEAD BODY HAD SUNK INTO A FOUL-SMELLING *HOLE*-- THE *LAZARUS PIT*... HAD LAIN THERE FOR A HANDFUL OF SECONDS...

THEN, SLOWLY, THE SLAB ON WHICH HE LAY *ROSE*...THE STILL FORM *STIRRED*...

...ERUPTED INTO FURIOUS *MOTION!*

AND *NOW*...

IT'S...*IMPOSSIBLE!* HE'S *DEAD!* I EXAMINED HIS CORPSE *PERSONALLY!*

THEN THE LEGENDS ARE *TRUE!*

...THE LEGENDS THAT SAY *RĀS AL GHŪL* HAS BEEN REBORN *MANY TIMES!*

YES--

AND *MORE!* WHEN MY FATHER FIRST RETURNS TO LIFE, HE HAS THE STRENGTH OF *TEN*--

--A FIT OF *MADNESS* SEIZES HIM!

CAREFUL, *LING*... DON'T *TRY* UNTIL WE KNOW WHAT WE'RE *DEALING* WITH!

LING FEARS NEITHER *MAN*... NOR *GHOST!*

HOWEVER, EVEN AS THE COURAGEOUS MONGOLIAN JUMPS, AN ARM LASHES OUT TOO QUICKLY TO BE *SEEN*--

AND HE *DROPS* LIKE A SACK OF BROKEN TWIGS!

I'VE NEVER *SEEN* SUCH A POWERFUL PUNCH!

TALIA IS *RIGHT!* *RĀ'S* HAS BECOME *SUPERHUMANLY* STRONG ...AND *INSANE!*

IN THIS STATE, HE MIGHT *ATTACK* THESE INNOCENT PEOPLE--!

...SO IT'S *MY SHOW!*

HE'S NOT THINKING CLEARLY... HE JUST *MIGHT* FALL FOR THE OLDEST TRICK IN THE BOOK--

I'LL FAKE A *LEFT HOOK*--

--AND PUT EVERYTHING I'VE *GOT* INTO A *RIGHT!*

3

I-- I'VE NEVER HIT ANY MAN *HARDER...*

...AND HE DIDN'T *BLINK!*

PLEASE... YOU MUST SEE IT'S *USELESS!* NO MORTAL *ALIVE* CAN STOP MY FATHER!

MAYBE *NOT, TALIA!*

BUT NO MORTAL ALIVE CAN STOP ME FROM *TRYING,* EITHER!

IN MERE *SECONDS,* THE STRUGGLE IS *FINISHED...* WITH *THE BATMAN* FALLEN A VICTIM...

4

DON'T EXPECT TO ESCAPE IN THE *CAR!* I'M NOT GOOD AT *FIGHTING*... BUT I KNOW *MACHINES*--

AND I'VE *WRECKED* THIS ONE!

NO MATTER! WE HAVE *BETTER* TRANSPORTATION!

FATHER... CAN YOU *UNDERSTAND* ME--?

Y-YES...

YOU *REMEMBER*--? THE *HOVERCRAFT!*

THANK THE GODS... *BATMAN LIVES!*

GOOD-BYE... BELOVED!

MOMENTS LATER...

YOU *OKAY, BATMAN?*

YES... *HUMILIATED*-- BUT PHYSICALLY ALL RIGHT!

HOW'S *LING?*

NOT GOOD!

HE HAS A LOT OF BROKEN BONES AND SOME INTERNAL *BLEEDING!*

HE NEEDS A *HOSPITAL!* I CAN REPAIR THE DAMAGE I DID TO THE CABLE CAR AND TAKE HIM DOWN THE MOUNTAIN!

WHICH LEAVES ME WITH ONE LAST QUESTION...

...WHERE DID *RĀ'S* AND *TALIA* GO?

THEY RAN IN *THAT* DIRECTION!

THE BATMAN LOOKS IN THE DIRECTION MOLLY IS POINTING... AND, SUDDENLY, THERE IS THE SOUND OF A POWERFUL ENGINE! SNOW SHIFTS...

...THE WHITENESS DROPS AWAY TO REVEAL SLEEK, SHINY STEEL --

--AND A STRANGELY SHAPED CRAFT LIFTS INTO THE AIR!...

...SOME SORT OF HOVERCRAFT, MODIFIED FOR TRAVEL ON THIS TERRAIN!

RĀ'S AND TALIA ARE GETTING AWAY CLEAN--

--AND THERE'S NO WAY WE CAN NAIL THEM!

MAYBE THERE IS! I'VE WON A FEW OLYMPIC MEDALS ON SKIS--

--AND GUESS WHAT I'VE JUST FOUND?

MISS POST... YOU'RE A TREASURE!

WITH THESE, I HAVE AT LEAST A CHANCE--

CORRECTION... WE HAVE A CHANCE!

I'M TIRED OF YOU DOING ALL THE WORK!

I CAN'T PERMIT YOU TO ENDANGER...

TO STOP ME, YOU'LL HAVE TO CATCH ME!

--BYE-BYE!

WITHIN A *HEARTBEAT, THE BATMAN* IS HURTLING AFTER MOLLY POST!

THE LONG, STEEP SLOPE IN FRONT OF HIM IS A BLUR... EVERY MUSCLE REACTING TO THE CHALLENGE OF SPEED, SNOW AND WIND--

MOLLY'S *GOOD*... *VERY* GOOD!

SHE'S CHOSEN A ROUTE THAT'LL GET US TO THE BOTTOM *BEFORE* THE HOVER-CRAFT--*MAYBE!*

UNFORTUNATELY, IT'S ALSO A PATH FULL OF *OBSTACLES* AND *DROP-OFFS!*

THE GIRL IS *INCREDIBLE!* SHE'S GOTTEN IN *FRONT* OF *RĀ'S* AND *TALIA*--

HOW CAN SHE POSSIBLY *HOPE* TO HALT THEM?

HOPE I CAN FINISH WITHOUT BREAKING A *LIMB!*

IT WAS BAD ENOUGH BEING HUMILIATED BY *RĀ'S*--

--TO BE SHOWN UP BY *MOLLY* WOULD BE MORE THAN MY PRIDE COULD *STAND!*

7

THEN, *THE BATMAN'S* UNVOICED QUESTION IS *ANSWERED*-- FOR THE GIRL HEAVES A *SKI-POLE* AT THE ON-RUSHING VEHICLE... THROWS IT AT THE SPINNING *PROPELLER* WHICH HOLDS THE CRAFT ALOFT-

...ALUMINUM CLASHES WITH STEEL--TO *PERFECT* EFFECT! THE PROPELLER IS *FOULED*...

SKKAKKKKKKKKKK

BUT THE ALUMINUM POLE, UNFIT FOR SUCH A STRAIN, *SNAPS!* A JAGGED END IS FLUNG TOWARD MOLLY...

...AND...

AGGGGH

FOOMFP

AS *RĀ'S AL GHŪL* AND HIS DAUGHTER STUMBLE AWAY, *THE BATMAN* SKIDS TO MOLLY'S SIDE...

THE YOUNG FOOL *RUINED* OUR *VEHICLE!*

HURRY, FATHER... WE MUST FLEE! *THE BATMAN* IS COMING--

AND I DOUBT YOU'LL BEST HIM IN COMBAT A *SECOND* TIME!

BLAST!-- A *ROTTEN* CHOICE... CHASE RĀ'S...OR GET MOLLY TO MEDICAL HELP!

NO... NOT *REALLY* ANY CHOICE AT ALL!

8

GUESS I MESSED YOU OVER, HUH, BIG FELLA? GETTING MYSELF *STUCK* IN THE CRUNCH!

I'M *SORRY*...

DON'T BE, KID! YOU'RE A GOOD GIRL,,, ONE OF THE *BEST!*

AND, AS MIDNIGHT WRAPS THE MOUNTAINSIDE IN CHILL DARKNESS, *THE BATMAN RETURNS!*...

LUCK *HAS* TO GO MY WAY SOONER OR LATER!

MAYBE *RĀ'S* LEFT A *TRACE* ...A *CLUE!*

IF I FIND *SOMETHING--ANYTHING*--TO GIVE ME A START,,,

...AND HERE IT *IS!* THIS BIT OF LEATHER!

NOT *MUCH*-- BUT *ENOUGH!*

MOLLY AND *LING* ARE BADLY INJURED,,, *MATCHES MALONE* IS *DEAD*... SO *I'M* LEFT TO FACE *RĀ'S AL GHŪL ALONE!*

,,,GUESS I ALWAYS *KNEW* IT WOULD BE JUST *RĀ'S* AND *BATMAN* AT THE,,, *END!*

9

HEAT... FIERCE AND MERCILESS... A SUN THAT STINGS THE EYES AND AIR THAT SCORCHES THE LUNGS AND HUNDREDS OF MILES OF SAND THAT SHIMMERS AND GLISTENS AND BURNS...

THIS... IS THE *DESERT!*--A HELLISH PANORAMA OF BLAZING EMPTINESS THAT DEFIES LIVING CREATURES...

YET, MEN *DO* LIVE HERE! AND STRANGER STILL, *SOME* MEN *PROSPER*...

YOU SENT FOR *MANY* SUPPLIES, FATHER! I SEE AT LEAST *FIFTY CAMELS!*

IT WAS NECESSARY! THE *DETECTIVE* ...*THE BATMAN*... DESTROYED SEVERAL OF MY BASES!

WE HAVE MUCH *REBUILDING* TO DO!

I HAVE TOO FEW YEARS LEFT, DAUGHTER!

I HAVE GONE TO THE *LAZARUS PIT* OFTEN...*TOO* OFTEN!

SOON IT WILL NO LONGER RESTORE LIFE TO MY BODY! I MUST BEGIN PUTTING INTO EFFECT MY *PLAN*...

...MY *PLANS* TO RESTORE *HARMONY* TO OUR SAD PLANET!

I HAVE BEEN CALLED *CRIMINAL* AND *GENIUS*... AND I AM *NEITHER*! I AM AN *ARTIST*!

I HAVE A VISION... OF AN *EARTH* AS CLEAN AND PURE AS A SNOW-SWEPT *MOUNTAIN*...

...OR THE *DESERT* OUTSIDE!

IT IS THE VISION OF A *MADMAN*!

HOW *DARE* YOU ENTER MY TENT *UNASKED*?!

I'M NOT ABOUT TO STAND ON *CEREMONY, RA'S!*

THE *DETECTIVE*! I WOULD SAY YOUR PRESENCE IS *IMPOSSIBLE*-- IF I DID NOT *KNOW* YOUR ABILITIES!

MAY I ASK HOW YOU *FOUND* ME?

YOU DROPPED *THIS*... A *CAMEL'S BRIDLE*!

AND I RECALLED THAT ONLY TRIBESMEN FROM THIS AREA DECORATE THEIR ANIMALS' GEAR WITH *BEADWORK*!

THEN I SIMPLY *OBSERVED* UNTIL I SAW A SUPPLY-CARAVAN GOING WHERE NOBODY IS SUPPOSED TO BE!

THOUGH I'VE NEVER INTENTIONALLY KILLED... I *SWEAR* YOU WILL NOT LEAVE HERE ALIVE UNLESS YOU *SURRENDER*!

11

THEREFORE, I OFFER YOU A *BARGAIN!*--A CHANCE TO *EARN* YOUR LIFE! I CHALLENGE YOU TO A *DUEL*... TO THE *DEATH!* DO YOU *ACCEPT?*

WHEN DO WE *BEGIN?*

DETECTIVE ...I RESPECT YOU AS I RESPECT NO *OTHER!*

YOU ARE TRULY A *MAGNIFICENT* FOE!

IT WOULD *GRIEVE* ME TO CALL FOR HELP... TO ORDER YOU *SHOT!*

IMMEDIATELY!

TALIA, BRING MY *FINEST WEAPONS!*

HEAT... A VICIOUS, INTANGIBLE *BEAST* HUNGRY FOR MORTAL FLESH...

...THERE IS THE HEAT... AND TWO STRONG MEN, EACH DETERMINED AND EACH, IN HIS OWN WAY, SPLENDID...

...TWO MEN LOCKED IN THE MOST TERRIBLE OF *ENCOUNTERS*...

ANG

...AND A LOVELY WOMAN WHOSE TEARS GO UNSEEN...

12

THIS LONG AFTERNOON IS FILLED WITH THE CLANGOR OF CLASHING BLADES...

...AND THE STENCH OF BODIES STRAINED TO THE LIMIT OF HUMAN ENDURANCE...

THE SUN REDDENS, DIMS, SLIPS BEHIND THE DISTANT DUNES... SHADOWS SOFTEN THE HARSHNESS AND CREEP ACROSS THE WASTES...

...AND IT HAS DECREED ME *VICTOR!* FAREWELL, GREATEST OF ENEMIES!

SUDDENLY, THE *UNEXPECTED* ...THE *TRAGIC!* A *SCORPION* RISES INTO THE COO NESS, SEEKING PREY, AND *FINDS*... *THE BATMAN!*

YOU ARE *PROUD, DETECTIVE!* YOU DO NOT PLEAD FOR *AID*...

...FOR THE *ANTIDOTE* TO THE POISON IN YOUR BLOOD!

NOR WOULD I *GIVE* IT! THE DESERT IS THE SHAPER OF MY *DESTINY*...

COME, DAUGHTER!

A MOMENT, FATHER...

13

...A FINAL KISS!

AN ACRID, BITTER TASTE... A BITTERNESS THE DYING *BATMAN* IS BARELY AWARE OF AS IT TOUCHES PARCHED LIPS...

...UNTIL--*MIRACULOUSLY*-- HE FEELS STRENGTH FLOODING HIS TORTURED LIMBS, HIS PULSEBEAT QUICKENS!...

TREMBLING, HE *STANDS*...

...DRIVEN BY AN INSTINCT HE CANNOT *NAME*--AN INSTINCT BEYOND *UNDERSTANDING*-- HE STRIDES TOWARD A CERTAIN *DESTINATION*...

...TO WHERE *RĀ'S AL GHŪL* STANDS ALONE, LOST IN SOLITARY THOUGHT!

RĀ'S!

BY THE *GODS!* YOU PURSUE ME PAST YOUR *DYING*...!

ARE YOU *MAN*-- OR *FIEND FROM HELL?*

14

HE DIDN'T *MOVE*... DIDN'T EVEN *TRY* TO RESIST!

PERHAPS, BELOVED, HE RECOGNIZED HIS... *MASTER!*

WILL YOU TAKE HIM TO THE *AUTHORITIES?*

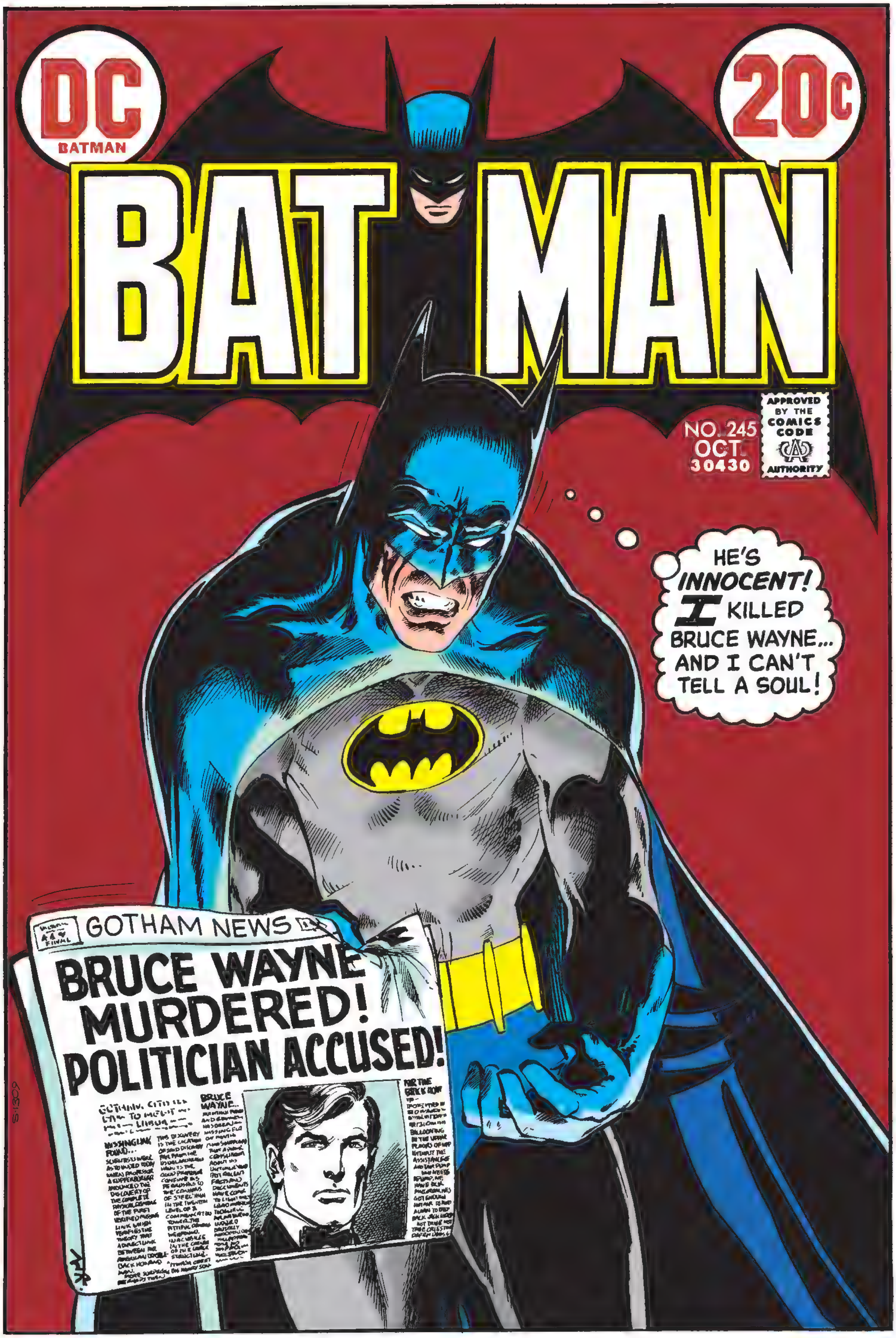
I *MUST!* I AM SORRY!

AND I? AM I *ALSO* TO BE IMPRISONED?

Now... THE NIGHT IS SILENT... AND FILLED WITH GRIEF...

The End

16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BATMAN
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BAT MAN
NO. 245
OCT.
30430
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
HE'S INNOCENT! I KILLED BRUCE WAYNE... AND I CAN'T TELL A SOUL!
GOTHAM NEWS
BRUCE WAYNE MURDERED! POLITICIAN ACCUSED!
BRUCE WAYNE...
MISSING LINK FOUND...
S-1809

FROM THE DARKNESS OF THE CITY'S SECRET HEART COMES THE...

BATMAN

IN THE *SKY*, THE SILENT CALL FOR THE DREAD *BATMAN!* AND ON A *GOTHAM CITY AVENUE*, A *FAR* FROM SILENT *ARGUMENT*..

BILKER, I SAY THIS ABSURD ACCUSATION IS *SLANDER!*--AND I'LL HAVE YOUR *HIDE* FOR IT!

THERE ARE *COURTS* IN THIS COUNTRY--

TRUE, *MISTER HARVEY!* I EXPECT YOU'LL BE SEEING A *LOT* OF THEM AFTER I PRODUCE MY *PROOF* TOMORROW!

GENTLEMEN... *PLEASE!*

BILKER ACCUSES RIVAL OF WAYNE MURDER!

IN THESE SHRILL, HEATED WORDS IS THE *BEGINNING* OF WHAT IS PERHAPS *THE BATMAN'S* MOST *BIZARRE* EXPLOIT--

The BRUCE WAYNE MURDER CASE!"

STORY: DENNY O'NEIL
ART: NEAL ADAMS & DICK GIORDANO
EDITOR: JULIUS SCHWARTZ

BY HEAVEN, I WON'T BE THREATENED BY A TWO-BIT UPSTART--

BUT YOU WILL--

--COOL OFF!

THE... BATMAN! WHERE THE DEVIL DID YOU COME FROM?

I CALLED HIM, MR. HARVEY!

WHY, COMMISSIONER GORDON--? WE'VE NO NEED OF A MASKED MEDDLER HERE!

WE HAVE NEED OF SOMEBODY WHO CAN MAKE SOME SENSE OF THIS... SHOUTING!

THE BATMAN KNEW BRUCE WAYNE... WELL!

HOW IS WAYNE INVOLVED?

AS YOU PROBABLY KNOW, BATMAN, THESE... AH--GENTLEMEN ARE EACH BACKING CANDIDATES IN THE FORTHCOMING MAYORALTY ELECTION!

A LESS CHARITABLE MAN THAN MYSELF MIGHT CALL THEM... POLITICAL BOSSES!

MR. BILKER IS ACCUSING MR. HARVEY OF HAVING WAYNE KILLED!

ANY PARTICULAR REASON, BILKER?

YES! IMMEDIATELY PRIOR TO HIS DISAPPEARANCE, WAYNE ANNOUNCED HE WAS WITHDRAWING SUPPORT FROM HARVEY'S MAN!

AND IN THE MORNING, I INTEND TO PROVE HARVEY'S GUILT!

2

TEN *MINUTES* FROM THE SECOND YOU OPEN YOUR LYING MOUTH, *BILKER*, I'LL HAVE EVERY LAWYER IN THE *STATE* ON YOU!

BETTER SAVE THEM FOR *YOUR-SELF!*

GET *OUT* OF HERE -- *BOTH* OF YOU!

DO YOU THINK WAYNE WAS *REALLY* MURDERED?-- THE REPORTS SAID HIS *PLANE* CRASHED IN SOUTH AMERICA!

I CAN'T EXACTLY *SAY*, COMMISSIONER! BUT THIS I *CAN* SAY... *GOTHAM CITY* CAN'T *AFFORD* AN UGLY POLITICAL SQUABBLE JUST NOW!

IT WOULD TEAR THE TOWN TO *SHREDS!*

SO... I'LL DO A BIT OF QUIET *INVESTIGATING...*

IT'S TRUE ENOUGH I *DID* PULL MY SUPPORT FROM THE HARVEY CREW RIGHT BEFORE I STAGED BRUCE WAYNE'S *PHONY DEATH--*

... BILKER'S CANDIDATE IS THE BEST OF A *ROTTEN* LOT!

... AND REPORT TO YOU *LATER!*

BUT *BILKER'S* STORY IS PHONY AS A TIN GUMDROP! --*OBVIOUSLY!* BECAUSE UNDER THIS COSTUME *I AM BRUCE WAYNE!*

VOTE FOR MACHIAVELLI

THE QUESTION BECOMES -- IS HE *DELIBERATELY* LYING? -- OR IS HE BEING *DUPED?*

3

MAYBE THE *ANSWER* LIES IN THE ROOM *BELOW*-- BILKER'S *PRIVATE OFFICE!*

SEEMS I'VE TIMED MY ARRIVAL *PERFECTLY!*

SAY, BOSS-- *TELL ME...*

...YA GONNA SOCK IT TO THAT HARVEY FOR *REAL?*

IN MY HAND I HOLD A *PAPER* WHICH WILL *DESTROY* THEM *PERMANENTLY!*

INDEED I *AM!* BY TOMORROW NIGHT, HARVEY AND HIS ORGANIZATION WILL BE *GARBAGE!*

I'D LIKE TO *SEE* YOUR *EVIDENCE!*

...TH' *BATMAN!*

I MIGHT HAVE *KNOWN* YOU'D COME SNOOPING!

RICHARD... *EJECT* THIS FOOL! HE FOULS THE *PREMISES!*

MY *PLEASURE,* BOSS!

OH... *BROTHER!* HERE WE GO *AGAIN!*

OKAY, CHUM... I'LL PLAY THE IDIOT GAME!

TRY YOUR *BEST SHOT!*

4

SEEMS LIKE EVERY CREEP I GO AGAINST HAS A WALKING TUB OF *SUET* WHOSE BRAINS ARE IN HIS *KNUCKLES!*

THEY *HUFF* AND *PUFF* AND *SWING*...

...WORK UP A LOT OF *SWEAT* MAKING LIKE *BRAWLERS* WHEN THEY PROBABLY COULDN'T WHIP *ORPHAN ANNIE!*

EVENTUALLY I GET *TIRED* OF THEIR ANTICS--

...OR MAYBE I FEEL *SORRY* FOR THEM! ANYWAY, I USUALLY PUT THEM OUT OF THEIR MISERY WITH A SHOT TO THE *GUT*--AND A BIT OF *KARATE!*

SLEEP TIGHT, *DUMMY!*

A *SUGGESTION*, BILKER! REPLACE THE GOON WITH A *NURSEMAID!*

NOW I SHALL ASK *POLITELY* FOR THE *PAPER!*

A-ALL RIGHT--

AS YOU'LL *SEE*, IT'S A NOTE FROM *BRUCE WAYNE HIMSELF...!* HE GAVE IT TO ME THE DAY HE LEFT FOR *SOUTH AMERICA!*

I CAN *READ*, BILKER! ONE OF MY *MANY* ACCOMPLISHMENTS!

IT SAYS...

A WHISPER OF *ASTONISHMENT* ESCAPES *THE BATMAN'S* LIPS AS HE SCANS THE HAND-WRITTEN LINES--

From the Desk of
BRUCE WAYNE

Dear Bilker:
I have reason to believe Jeffers Harvey plans my murder... Should anything happen to me, please notify the authorities.

Cordially,
Bruce Wayne

EXPERTS WILL VERIFY THAT THE STATIONERY IS FROM WAYNE'S *PRIVATE STOCK--*

...AND THE *HANDWRITING* IS *ALSO* HIS!

IT'S *UNCANNY* --AND *TRUE!* I'D ALMOST *SWEAR I DID* PEN THIS!

EXCEPT FOR ONE THING--!

WHAT HAS *THE BATMAN* SPOTTED?

TOMORROW AT NINE, I SHALL CALL A *PRESS CONFERENCE* -- AND *CRUSH* MY OPPOSITION!

DON'T *COUNT* ON IT!

I'M SORELY TEMPTED NOT TO *INTERFERE!* HARVEY'S CANDIDATE IS A CHEAP POLITICAL *HACK!*

MacCUTCHEON

VOTE MacC

IT WOULD BE *EASY* TO STAND BY AND DO *NOTHING* UNTIL THE ELECTION IS *PAST!*

6

THEN I COULD EXPOSE BILKER AND MAYBE GET A *DECENT* MAN ELECTED MAYOR!

NO DENYING IT... I'M *TEMPTED!*

BUT NOBODY APPOINTED ME A *GOD!* SO I'LL DO WHAT I'VE *ALWAYS* DONE--

--FOLLOW THE PATH OF *JUSTICE*... *WHEREVER* IT MIGHT *LEAD!*

AND... IT LEADS TO A *BROWNSTONE* IN A RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOOD...

JUDGING FROM THAT *LIGHT,* MY QUARRY IS BURNING SOME *MIDNIGHT OIL!* I'VE *HEARD* HE LIKES THE WEE HOURS--

--WHICH IS *FINE!*

I'D HATE TO WAKE HIM *UP!*

HE'S HARD AT *WORK*... ON A VERY FANCY *COMPUTER!*--AS I *HOPED!*

THOSE *HANDWRITING* SPECIMENS ON THE WALL PRETTY MUCH *CLINCH* MY SUSPICIONS!

YOU--OSGOOD PEABODY!

S-STAY *AWAY, B-BATMAN!* I WANT NO *T-TROUBLE!*

ME...? GIVE YOU *TROUBLE?* NO, PEABODY-- I'M ONLY HERE TO EXAMINE YOUR *MACHINE!*

IT LOOKS ABOUT THE WAY I *PICTURED* IT WHEN I READ OF YOUR HOBBY IN A *TECHNICAL JOURNAL!*

AS I RECALL, IT'S A MODIFIED *COMPUTER*-- MODIFIED TO DUPLICATE *HAND-WRITING!*

YOU PLACE THE WRITING SPECIMEN BENEATH THE *ELECTRONIC SCANNER,* LIKE THIS--? AND NEXT...

--TYPE ANY LITTLE-OLD MESSAGE YOU CARE TO ON THE *KEYBOARD*--

TAK TAK TAK TAK

--THROW THE *SWITCH*--

...AND THE INGENIOUS COMPUTER *DUPLICATES* IT IN THE PENMANSHIP OF THE *SPECIMEN!*

Crime does not pay

INNOCENT TOY... EXCEPT IF IT IS USED *WRONGLY!* AND IT *WAS*...AS THIS PIECE OF *BRUCE WAYNE'S STATIONERY* PROVES!

IT WASN'T HARD TO *STEAL* FROM WAYNE'S OFFICE, WAS IT--?

8

--NOR WAS IT DIFFICULT TO FIND A SPECIMEN OF WAYNE'S *HAND-WRITING!* YOU'VE USED YOUR TOY TO COMMIT *FORGERY*--

--*HAVEN'T YOU?*

H-HE *FORCED* ME... *BILKER!* HE SAID HE'D *KILL* ME... AND NOW HE *WILL!* UNLESS...

UNLESS *WHAT,* PEADODY?

UNLESS I CAN... *STOP* YOU...

...LIKE *THIS!*

ZAKK

IN *PANIC,* THE COWERING SCIENTIST TOUCHES LIVE, BARE *WIRES* TO THE METAL SURFACE *THE BATMAN'S* HAND RESTS ON-- SENDING HUNDREDS OF NAKED *VOLTS* COURSING INTO THE CRIME-FIGHTER'S BODY--

ELECTRICITY... CONTRACTING MY *FINGER MUSCLES!* CAN'T... *LET GO!*

SORRY, BATMAN! I DON'T *WISH* TO HURT YOU...

...BUT I NEED *PROTECTION!*

AT FIRST, THERE IS A *SMELL*... OF COPPER AND RUBBER *OVERHEATING*... AND A WISP OF PALE *SMOKE*...

...THEN A SUDDEN SPROUT OF *FLAME* AS THE INTRICATE CIRCUITS WITHIN THE COMPUTER MELT... *BURN*--!

--SOON, THE DEVICE BLOSSOMS TO FULL *FIRE!* AS THOUGH HE WERE CRAWLING THROUGH *GELATIN*, *THE BATMAN* DRAGS HIMSELF SLOWLY ACROSS THE STEEL FLOOR--

THE BATMAN'S FINGERS *RELAX*...

--CHOKING, STILL *DAZED*, PUSHED BY SHEER *SURVIVAL INSTINCT*, HE SEEKS *ESCAPE!*

STILL MOVING *INSTINCTIVELY*, HE GRASPS THE FAMILIAR, SMOOTH SURFACE OF HIS *BATROPE* AND SLIDES TO *SAFETY!*

--WHILE, BEHIND HIM, THE HOUSE *ERUPTS*, COLORING THE NIGHT *RED*...

--*FINDS* IT..! THE COOL AIR FLOODS HIS FUME-FILLED *LUNGS*, AND HE *GASPS* IN *GRATITUDE!*...

10

I'M *LUCKY... I GUESS!* IF I HADN'T BEEN WEARING *GLOVES*, I MIGHT'VE BEEN *ELECTROCUTED!*

I WAS *CONGRATULATING* MYSELF FOR SPOTTING THE TELLTALE *CLAMP MARKS* ON BILKER'S PHONY *BRUCE WAYNE* NOTE! MARKS WHICH REMINDED ME OF PEABODY'S *EXPERIMENTS!*

BUT THE EVIDENCE IN HIS LAB IS *BURNED...* AND HE'S *GONE*, ALONG WITH EVERY CHANCE OF STOPPING BILKER...

...EXCEPT *ONE!*

MEANWHILE -- IN *BILKER'S* OFFICE...

YOU'VE GOT TO *HELP* ME...YOU'VE *GOT* TO! I CAN'T *DEAL* WITH THE *LAW*... WITH *THE BATMAN!*

YOU *PROMISED* NOTHING WOULD *HAPPEN!*

NOTHING *WILL*, OSGOOD! -- *TRUST* ME!

WE'LL PUT YOU ON A *SHIP*... BOUND FOR *AFRICA!* YOU CAN HIDE AS LONG AS *NECESSARY!*

I HAVE NO *TICKET*... NO *MONEY!*

MACCLITCHE

YOU'RE NOT *TRUSTING* ME -- I'LL TAKE CARE OF... *EVERYTHING!*

JUST... *RELAX*, OSGOOD!

WE'RE VERY *CONCERNED* ABOUT OSGOOD! *AREN'T* WE, RICHARD?

YOU *BETCHA*, BOSS!

AFTER *ALL*, WE *CAN'T* LET THE POLICE GET HOLD OF YOU, OSGOOD!

A CONFESSION FROM YOU WOULD *RUIN* US!

PIER

WE'VE *ARRIVED*... AT YOUR--AH, *FINAL DESTINATION!*

RIGHT THIS *WAY*, OSGOOD, BUDDY!

I DON'T *UNDERSTAND!* THERE'S NO *SHIP*..!

I *LIED* TO YOU! YOU WON'T BE GOING TO *AFRICA*...

BUT HE *WILL BE GOIN'*; HUH, BOSS?

AH, YES! IN A MOMENT, HIS TROUBLES... AND *OURS*-- WILL BE *OVER!*

NO!... PLEASE!

I... I'LL DO *ANYTHING*--!

INDEED YOU SHALL... INCLUDING *DIE!*

STOP *SNIVELING*, OSGOOD! THESE BEAUTIES WON'T PULL THEIR *TRIGGERS*...

12

--THOUGH FOR A SECOND TIME TONIGHT, I'M TEMPTED-- TO WALK AWAY!

YOU DON'T DESERVE MUCH OF A BREAK!

...BECAUSE, DESPITE YOUR GENIUS WITH MACHINERY, YOU'RE STUPID!

YOU CAME TO BILKER EXPECTING MERCY...?

YEAH...THAT'S DUMB! TO THIS KIND OF SLIME, MERCY DOESN'T EXIST!-- TO HIM, YOU'RE NO MORE THAN A USEFUL WORM!

YOU, ME...GOTHAM CITY! TO THE BILKERS OF THE WORLD, WE'RE TOOLS...THE INSTRUMENTS OF HIS GREED!

KLAWWWW

BAWOOSH

LEARN A LESSON, OSGOOD PEABODY! CLIMB INTO A PIGSTY-- YOU'RE GOING TO GET DIRTY!

13

A WAIL OF *SIRENS*, AND THEN...

WE GOT YOUR *MESSAGE*, *BATMAN!* AS *USUAL*, YOU *HANDLED* THE SITUATION-- *NEATLY!*

YOU CAN FISH BILKER AND HIS PLAYMATE OUT OF THE *RIVER*, COMMISSIONER!

...OR *DON'T*... I'M NOT IN A MOOD TO *CARE!*

I IMAGINE *OSGOOD PEABODY* IS READY TO *CONFESS*... IN *FULL!*

YES... *YES!*

HOW CAN I *THANK* YOU--? YOU SAVED MY *LIFE!*

NO... *YOU* SAVED YOUR LIFE! YOU SAID YOU NEEDED *PROTECTION!* I FIGURED YOU'D GO TO *BILKER* FOR IT!

IT WASN'T HARD TO GUESS WHAT HE'D DO! SO I HID IN HIS CAR AND *WAITED!*

YOU'VE *CINCHED* THE ELECTION OF THE *HARVEY* CANDIDATE!--*HAPPY?*

OH, *SURE!* I'VE EXCHANGED *ONE* FORM OF CORRUPTION FOR *ANOTHER!* -- I'M *OVERJOYED!*

EXCUSE ME, COMMISSIONER! I HAVE A *JOURNEY* TO MAKE!

...TO A *SOUTH AMERICAN JUNGLE!*

14

THE GOTHAM NEWS

BRUCE WAYNE FOUND ALIVE!

GOTHAM MILLIONAIRE SURVIVES JUNGLE PLANE CRASH!

THE END

DC
BATMAN

20c

NO. 246
DEC.
30430

BAT MAN

APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY

ROBIN--?
OH, NO--
NOT AGAIN!

"HOW MANY WAYS CAN A ROBIN DIE?"

S-1301

DC
BATMAN

20¢
NO. 251
SEPT.
30430

BATMAN

APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY

HA HA HA HA HA HA

LOOK OUT, GOTHAM!
THE JOKER'S BACK IN TOWN!

HAHA
HAHAHAHA
HAHAHAHA
HAHA
HA
HA
HAHA
HAHA
HAHA
HAHAHAHA
HA
HAHA
BATMAN
FROM THE DARKNESS OF A COUNTRY ROAD SOMEWHERE NORTH OF GOTHAM CITY... AND FROM THE GREATER DARK OF A PAST FILLED WITH EVIL... COMES A TERRIFYINGLY FAMILIAR FACE!
THUNDER RACKS THE EARTH AND LIGHTNING SCARS THE SKY AND WETNESS STREAMS FROM THE CLOUDS LIKE TEARS OF MOURNING! IT IS AS THOUGH NATURE IT-SELF WERE WEEPING!
AND WELL IT MIGHT, FOR THERE IS DEATH ABROAD THIS NIGHT!
THE JOKER'S FIVE-WAY REVENGE!
STORY: DENNY O' NEIL
ART: NEAL ADAMS
EDITOR: JULIUS SCHWARTZ
S-563

IT IS NEARING **ELEVEN O'CLOCK** WHEN POLICE COMMISSIONER GORDON ANSWERS A SUMMONS TO A LONELY SPOT ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF THE CITY... AND GAZES AT A HUDDLED FORM SPRAWLED IN THE RAIN-SOAKED MUD...

I'VE SEEN A LOT OF **DEAD MEN** BEFORE, COMMISSIONER -- BUT NONE LIKE **HIM!** LOOK AT THE **FACE**--

YES! TWISTED IN A **HIDEOUS GRIN**--! **GHASTLY!**

I WISH **THE BATMAN** WOULD ARRIVE!

I'M **HERE**, COMMISSIONER! BEEN HERE FOR **TEN MINUTES!**

BLAST IT, BATMAN! MUST YOU CONSTANTLY **STARTLE** ME--?

SORRY, SIR! I WANTED TO EXAMINE THE SCENE **UNDISTURBED!**

WELL, WHAT DO YOU **MAKE** OF IT?

I'M AFRAID THERE'S NO **QUESTION** OF WHO COMMITTED THE CRIME! THE DEAD MAN'S **GRIN**--

--IT'S THE TRADEMARK OF ONLY **ONE** CRIMINAL--

...AND TO CLINCH IT, I FOUND THIS NEARBY!

J

A JOKER!

I'LL DETAIL A SQUAD OF MY **BEST DETECTIVES** IMMEDIATELY AND...

GO AHEAD, COMMISSIONER -- IF IT'LL MAKE YOU **FEEL** BETTER! BUT I HAVE AN IDEA **OFFICIAL** METHODS WILL BE TOO **SLOW** TO PREVENT FURTHER KILLINGS--

SO I'LL BE INVESTIGATING ON MY OWN.

EVER SINCE I HEARD THE **JOKER** ESCAPED FROM THE STATE HOSPITAL FOR THE CRIMINALLY **INSANE**, I'VE BEEN **EXPECT**-ING HIM TO SHOW UP--

--BUT THERE WAS NO **WAY** TO SEARCH FOR HIM IN A CITY OF **EIGHT MILLION** UNTIL HE MADE A **MOVE**--

2

--WHICH HE HAS! AND I'VE GOT A VERY GOOD IDEA WHAT HE'LL TRY NEXT!

I'VE KEPT A CLOSE WATCH ON THE MEMBERS OF HIS FORMER GANG --

ONE OF THEM WORKS AS A JANITOR IN THIS RATTY GYM! IT FIGURES... THE GUY'S A FORMER BOXER--

--USED TO BE A FAIR LIGHT-HEAVYWEIGHT! WENT BY THE NAME OF...

--PACKY WHITE!

TH' BATMAN! HEY, FELLA, GOOD TA SEE YA!

C'MON... LET'S JAW WHILE I WORK OUT!

STILL PRACTICING THE OLD SKILLS, EH, PACKY?

VEAH... FELLA MY AGE'S GOTTA KEEP IN SHAPE!

NOW... WHAT'S ON THAT SHARP MIND, HUH?

AS YOU KNOW, THE JOKER'S RATTLING AROUND LOOSE! I HAVE REASON TO BELIEVE HE SNUFFED A FRIEND OF YOURS---

WE FOUND PHILLY JACK BARTON DEAD.. AND HE WAS WEARING A BIG SMILE!

SOUNDS LIKE THE BOSS'S STYLE, FOR SURE!

OOPS! SORRY... MISSED THE BAG!

PERFECTLY ALL RIGHT!

SO WHAT'S POOR OL' PHILLY GOTTA DO WIT' ME?

OOPS!--MISSED AGAIN!

THINK NOTHING OF IT!

TO ANSWER YOUR QUESTION --ONE OF THE JOKER'S THUGS ... I MEAN, EMPLOYEES, BETRAYED HIM!

3

WHEN WE FINALLY **NAILED** HIM, HE SWORE HE'D KILL YOU **ALL** -- REMEMBER?

CHECK! YA FIGURE HE'LL COME AFTER OL' **PACKY**?

CORRECT! I'M GUESSING HE'LL SYSTEMATICALLY MURDER EVERY **ONE** OF YOU!-- UNLESS YOU PLACE YOURSELF UNDER **POLICE PROTECTION!**

GO TO JAIL WITH-OUT BEIN' **DRAGGED**? NOT **THIS** PUG--!

I CAN'T **FORCE** YOU TO COOPERATE, **PACKY**--

--HOWEVER, YOU JUST **MIGHT** HAVE A SLIGHT **ACCIDENT** -- A **FIST**-TYPE ACCIDENT---

--AND IT JUST MIGHT PUT YOU IN THE **HOSPITAL**--

YOU CAN **SUR-RENDER** YOUR-SELF -- OR WE CAN CONTINUE **PLAYING!**

YOUR CHOICE, **PACKY**-- **MAKE IT!**

--WHERE OFFICERS COULD **GUARD** YOU UNTIL THE **JOKER** IS **CAUGHT!**

4

SEEIN' AS HOW YA PUT IT LIKE *THAT* ... JAIL AIN'T SUCH A BAD JOINT! I GOT A LOTTA *PALS* IN THE SLAMMER!-- LONG AS I DON'T HAVETA STAY IN THERE *LONG*! I BEEN GOIN' *STRAIGHT!*

BE WIT'CHA IN A *SECOND* --! GOTTA TAKE A DRINK O' WATER... TAKE THE TASTE OF YOUR *KNUCKLES* OUTA MY MOUTH!

THE MANLY ART OF *PUGILISM* LOST A *CHAMP* WHEN YA PUT ON YOUR MASK, FELLA!

YA KNOW, IT'S KINDA *FUNNY!* YOU--*THE BATMAN* --WORRYIN' ABOUT A STRONG-ARM ARTIST LIKE OL' *PACKY!*

YEAH-- *HA-HA-* *REAL* FUNNY--

SO... *FUNNY...HA-HA* ... IT *HURTS*--

AAAA-GHH--

TOO *LATE!* HE'S BEEN POISONED! --WITH THE *NERVE-TOXIN* THE *JOKER* DEVELOPED--

--THE STUFF THAT CAUSES A PERSON TO LAUGH HIM-SELF TO *DEATH!*

ROUND ONE GOES TO THE *JOKER!*

S

AND, UNKNOWN TO **THE BATMAN**, HIS FOE IS ABOUT TO TAKE THE **SECOND** ROUND, ALSO! FOR, IN A SLEAZY HOTEL ROOM...

I'M S'PRISED TO **SEE** YA IN **GOTHAM**! I FIGGERED YA'D WANNA STAY CLEAR OF **THE BATMAN**!

COSY HOTEL

OH, DEAR ME, **NO**--

--I FULLY **EXPECT** HIM TO FIND ME, **REGARDLESS** OF WHERE I HIDE! I DON'T KNOW **HOW**... OR **WHEN**...

...BUT THE **CAPED CRUSADER** WILL LOCATE ME! HE **ALWAYS** DOES! **HOWEVER**, I INTEND TO BE **READY** FOR HIM!

BY THE WAY, WERE **YOU** THE ONE WHO BETRAYED ME, **ALBY**?

M-ME? AW, **JOKER**, ...I'M YER **PAL**!

THEN HAVE A **CIGAR**... **PAL**!

TRY IT! YOU'LL **LIKE** IT!

THANKS! MMM ... NOT A BAD **SMOKE**!

HEY... I BET YOU'RE PULLIN' A **GAG** ON ME, RIGHT? I BET THIS'S AN **EXPLODING** CIGAR, RIGHT?

SAME OLD **JOKER**..., ALWAYS WITH THE **GAGS**! WELL...I CAN GO ALONG WITH A LAUGH! I MEAN, WHAT **HARM** CAN A LITTLE EXPLODING CIGAR DO, RIGHT?

VOOM

HA HA HA HA HA HAHAHAHAHAHAHA

POOR FELLOW! HE GUESSED **PART** OF MY JOKE! A PITY HE **DIDN'T** GUESS THAT THE EXPLO-SIVE IN THE CIGAR WAS **NITRO-GLYCER-IN!**

REST IN **PIECES, ALBY!**

TEN MINUTES LATER, THE **BATMAN** *HEARS OF* **ALBY'S** *ABRUPT DEMISE ON THE* **POLICE RADIO,** *AND...*

THE **JOKER'S** *MAKING A* **FOOL** *OF ME! HE'S* **ALREADY** *KILLED THREE OF HIS FIVE EX-GANG MEMBERS...*

...THE **FOURTH** *--* **BIGGER MELVIN** *-- LIVES ON A CONVERTED* **GARBAGE SCOW** *IN THE WATERFRONT DISTRICT!*

MAYBE-- JUST **MAYBE** *-- I CAN GET TO HIM* **FIRST** *THIS TIME!*

SOON, AT **BIGGER MELVIN'S** *LESS-THAN-LAVISH LIVING QUARTERS...*

OH, MY **GOSH! THE BAT-MAN** *--! HE MUSTA FOUND OUT IT WAS* **ME** *WHO MUGGED THAT GEEZER IN* **GOTHAM PARK!**

I **GOTTA RUN!**

YOU!-- BIGGER MELVIN! WAIT!

NO CHANCE, LAWMAN!

THE BATMAN'S FASTER'N ME ... BUT I KNOW EVERY INCH OF THE DOCKS LIKE THE PALM OF MY HAND!

HE'LL NEVER CATCH ME!

I'LL DUCK 'ROUND THESE CRATES...

GO OVER THE WARE-HOUSE WALL!

PROBABLY LOST HIM... BUT TO MAKE SURE, I'LL SLIP UNDER THE DOCKS...

DIVE INTO THE SEWER PIPE...

... CRAWL A COUPLE OF BLOCKS UNDER-GROUND...

... COME OUT A GOOD MILE FROM MY JOINT! YEAH, I FOXED THE BATMAN, AN' NO KIDDIN'! NO WAY FOR HIM TO GRAB ME NOW...

AS I WAS SAYING, BIGGER...

GAKK!

...YOUR FORMER LEADER HAS DONE IN *THREE* OF YOUR ASSOCIATES, AND I HAVE REASON TO BELIEVE YOU'RE *NEXT* ON HIS LIST OF VICTIMS!

I'M ASKING YOU TO PUT YOURSELF IN *PROTECTIVE CUSTODY!*

S-SURE...

...ANYTHING YOU *SAY!* ONLY HOW'S ABOUT WE STOP BY MY SCOW SO'S I CAN GET MY *TOOTHBRUSH?*

A REASONABLE REQUEST! LEAD *ON!*

HEY...WELL, I DON'T WANNA SEEM *CHICKEN* OR NOTHIN'... BUT YOU MIND GOIN' IN *AHEAD* OF ME?

ANOTHER REASONABLE REQUEST! OKAY... FOLLOW ME!

OKAY, *BIGGER!* COAST IS *CLEAR!*

UNNGH!

BONK

BOY! WHAT KINDA DUMMY DOES HE TAKE ME FOR --? EXPECTIN' ME TO BUY THAT JOKER YARN!

I KNOW ALL HE WANTS IS TO PIN THAT MUGGING ON ME!

MY LOVE-TAP OUGHTTA KEEP HIM DREAMIN' LONG ENOUGH FOR ME TO GET MY TOOTH-BRUSH, MY GUN, AN' MY KNIFE ...THEN I'M HIGH-BALLIN' IT OUTA TOWN!

IN A COUPLE OF MINUTES MY TROUBLES WILL BE OVER!

SCANT SECONDS LATER...

THE IDIOT--I'M THE ONLY THING BETWEEN HIM AND A COFFIN, AND HE KAYOES ME!

I SHOULD REST A MOMENT... THE BLOW ON THE SKULL MADE SCRAMBLED EGGS OF MY BRAINS!

I DIDN'T THINK HE'D BE SO STUPID!

TOO LATE--! THE JOKER'S BEATEN ME AGAIN!-- HE'S LIKE A ONE-MAN PLAGUE!

I'M GROGGY...BUT I FIGURE BIGGER IS IN DANGER!

HE COMES...KILLS... AND VANISHES!

10

OR... HAS HE VANISHED?

QUICKLY, THE BATMAN WHIRLS... HIS PAIN-NUMBED SENSES TELLING HIM HE IS NOT ALONE IN THE SQUALID SHACK...

...BUT NOT QUITE QUICKLY ENOUGH! HE IS A FRACTION OF A HEARTBEAT TOO SLOW!

HE HAS TIME JUST TO GLIMPSE A GRIN BEFORE A HEEL SMASHES BRUTALLY INTO HIS FACE... AND OBLIVION CLAIMS HIM!

HIS LIFE IS MINE...

--I CAN CRUSH THE BREATH OUT OF HIM... EFFORTLESSLY! I CAN, AT LAST, TRIUMPH!

BUT SUCH A HOLLOW VICTORY--! IT WAS MERE LUCK THAT CAUSED MY ATTACK ON HIM TO SUCCEED!

I'D ALWAYS ENVISIONED MY WINNING AS A RESULT OF CUNNING... AT THE END OF A BITTER STRUGGLE BETWEEN THE BATMAN AND MYSELF--

-- HIM USING HIS DETECTIVE SKILLS

AND ME EMPLOYING THE DIVINE GIFT MEN CALL MADNESS!

NO! WITHOUT THE **GAME** THAT **THE BATMAN** AND I HAVE PLAYED FOR SO MANY YEARS, WINNING IS **NOTHING!**

HE SHALL **LIVE**... UNTIL I CAN DESTROY HIM **PROPERLY!**

BRO-**THER!** PEOPLE ARE MAKING A **HABIT** OF USING MY HEAD FOR A **BONGO DRUM!**

AND I'M **LETTING** THEM! THE **JOKER** NEARLY BOOTED MY SKULL INTO THE NEXT **COUNTY!**

UMMM... WHAT'S THIS?--LOOKS LIKE **CRUDE OIL** AND SOME SORT OF **SANDY** STUFF!

IT MUST'VE BEEN LEFT ON MY FACE BY THE **JOKER'S HEEL!**

A **CLUE?**--COULD BE! I CAN'T **READ** IT, THOUGH!

NOTHING TO DO EXCEPT CONTINUE THE **CHASE!** THERE'S JUST ONE OF THE **JOKER'S** GANG **LEFT**--

-- THE FORGER, **BING HOOLEY!** LAST I HEARD, HE WAS IN A HOME FOR THE **AGED!**

EVEN **CRIMINALS** GET OLD! THOSE WHO DON'T END UP IN PRISON, THE GUTTER... OR THE **GRAVE!**

AND, IN THE OFFICE OF THE CHARITY HOME...

YOU WISH TO SEE MISTER **HOOLEY, BATMAN?** I AM AFRAID THAT'S **IMPOSSIBLE!**--HE'S **GONE!**

WHERE, **SISTER?**

12

HE LEFT THIS *MORNING* WITH A DEAR FRIEND OF HIS... A *MISTER GENESILUS!*

SO NICE OF *MISTER GEN-ESILUS* TO CARE FOR THE *ELDERLY*, DON'T YOU AGREE?

I'M AFRAID *NOT, SISTER--*

--YOU'LL RECALL THAT *SAINT GENESILUS* IS THE *PATRON SAINT* OF *ACTORS* AND *COMEDIANS... JOKERS!*

THE *JOKER* KID-NAPED *HOOLEY* EARLY-- *BEFORE* HE COMMITTED THE REST OF THE MURDERS!

SO HE HAS TO HAVE *HOOLEY HIDDEN... SOME-WHERE!* ON SOME RAIN-SLICK STREET IN *GOTHAM*, THE *JOKER* HAS A *HIDE-OUT...*

WA-A-AIT! RAIN-*SLICK*... OF *COURSE!* IF I HADN'T BEEN SO BUSY CHASING AROUND, I'D HAVE SEEN THE *OBVIOUS--*

--AT LEAST WHEN I WIPED THE *GOO* OFF MY FACE!

ONE *AREA* WHERE THE *JOKER* COULD HAVE PICKED UP THAT PARTICULAR MIXTURE-- CRUDE PETROLEUM AND SAND--

--AND IT'S A SPOT MADE TO *ORDER* FOR HIM! LONELY... ISOLATED-- PERFECT!

I CAN BE THERE IN AN *HOUR*-- AND I *WILL BE!*

13

CONTAMINATED BEACH!
KEEP OUT
YESTERDAY, A SHIP --A TANKER--RAN AGROUND JUST OFF GOTHAM ISLAND ...DUMPING HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS OF GALLONS OF CRUDE OIL INTO THE SEA!
THIS STORM HAS PREVENTED ANY CLEAN-UP EFFORT--
...AND THE WIND HAS BEEN PUSHING THE FOULED WATER TOWARD THE MAINLAND!
WHICH MEANS THE BEACHES ARE FULL OF IT... AND ANYONE WALKING ON THE BEACH WOULD HAVE SAND AND OIL ON HIS SHOES!--AS THE JOKER DID!
LOGICALLY, HE'D HIDE HERE ...IN THE AQUARIUM BUILDING THE GOVERNMENT CLOSED LAST MONTH!
I HAVE A TINGLING AT THE BASE OF MY NECK...A FEELING OF DANGER!
--EXACTLY WHAT I WANT!
WITH NO EFFORT AT STEALTH, THE BATMAN BOLDLY ENTERS THE BUILDING... AND IS GREETED BY A PIERCINGLY CHILLING VOICE...
OH..BATMAN! YOU FOUND ME! I WAS CERTAIN YOU WOULD... AND I'M GLAD!
ANY PARTICULAR REASON, JOKER?
YES, YES... YES! ALL THE WHILE I WAS BEHIND BARS, I MISSED OUR CLASHES!
I DREAMED OF... HUMILIATING YOU--IN A SPECIALLY HUMOROUS WAY!
HOW DOES A SHARK EAT, IF HE LOSES HIS TEETH? A SHARK CANNOT LOS HIS TEETH BECAUSE A TEETH ARE BROKEN O NEW ONES ROTATE AND GRO
CARE TO BEGIN?
14

YES, YES...YES! TRY THIS!

A LAUGHING-GAS GRENADE? JOKER, YOU DISAPPOINT ME!

SURELY YOU EXPECTED ME TO EXPECT THAT PLOY! NATURALLY, I CAME PREPARED!

YOUR CHEMICAL ANTIDOTE? HOW WELL I RECALL THE TIME YOU INVENTED IT! OHHH... THIS IS FUN!

IN THE EXHIBITION HALL, I HAVE A SURPRISE FOR YOU! A DELIGHT I'VE NEVER USED--

I CAN HARDLY WAIT!

DON'T SINK YOUR FIST INTO ME JUST YET, BATMAN! NOT TILL YOU SEE THE SURPRISE I PROMISED!

NOTICE I'M HOLDING A HANDLE ATTACHED TO A CHAIN--

AT THE OTHER END IS A PLATFORM... AND MY OLD ASSOCIATE HOOLEY! I YANK THE CHAIN AND HOOLEY FALLS INTO THE GLASS TANK BELOW!

BUT DON'T WORRY! I'M NOT MEAN! HE WON'T DROWN--

NO, HE'LL BE A **MEAL** FOR THE **SHARK** I FOUND HALF-DEAD ON THE BEACH! POOR FISHY WAS HURT BY THE **OIL** SPILLAGE!

NOW, FOR MY **PROPOSITION!** I'LL ALLOW **HOOLEY** TO **LIVE** IF YOU PERMIT ME TO MANACLE YOUR HANDS BEHIND YOU...

...AND THEN I GO **SWIMMING** WITH THE SHARK?

OHH... YOU **ARE** CLEVER! WELL-- WHAT'S YOUR ANSWER?

PUT ON YOUR SHACKLE... AND ANSWER A LAST **QUESTION!**

FOR **YOU**-- **ANYTHING!**

WHY CHOOSE A **SHARK** AS THE INSTRUMENT OF YOUR REVENGE?

TAKE A **LOOK!** WE **RESEMBLE** EACH OTHER!

16

JOKER--YOU REALIZE YOU'RE UTTERLY...HOPELESSLY...INSANE?

IT'S MY MOST CHARMING TRAIT!

BYE-BYE, BATMAN! HAVE A NICE DINNER... I MEAN--BE A NICE DINNER!

HA HA HA HA

FOR DESSERT, SHARKY CAN HAVE HOOLEY!

HA HA HA HA HA

YOU... PROMISED--

I'M A NOTORIOUS LIAR!

TA-TA, ALL!

HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA

NEITHER OF US CAN LAST A MINUTE WITH THAT HUNGRY BEAST PURSUING US!

IT'S GOING FOR HOOLEY... ATTRACTED BY HIS BRIGHT RED JACKET!

17

I'VE **NEVER** HAD TO FIGHT SO **UN-PREPARED!** I'VE NEVER MET A **SEA PREDATOR** IN HIS OWN ELEMENT!

STILL, THERE **MAY** BE A WORK-ABLE MANEUVER--

...USE THE CHAIN-LINKS TO PUT ITS **TEETH** OUT OF COMMISSION AND--

--**HEAVE! HEAVE!!** ...MAYBE SNAP ITS **SPINE**...OR SOMETHING!

BREAK, BLAST YOU!-- **BREAK!!**

18

SUDDENLY, THE SHARK **SHUDDERS**... AND SLOWLY **SINKS!**

GOT THE SHACKLES OFF, TOO! THAT TOOK ABOUT **TWENTY SECONDS** ... SECONDS **HOOLEY** CAN'T **SPARE!** GOT TO GET HIM TO **AIR**--!

GLASS IS TOO SMOOTH TO **CLIMB**...

... AND TOO THICK TO **BREAK** WITH MY BARE HANDS! --NEED A **TOOL**...

... AND THERE IT **IS!**

HOOLEY'S WHEEL-CHAIR... GOOD, STURDY STEEL **FRAME** -- AND HEAVY! NOT THE **BEST** THING...

BUT THE ONLY ONE I **HAVE!**

ANOTHER TWENTY SECONDS GONE! **HOOLEY'S** PROBABLY **ALREADY** STOPPED BREATHING!

HE HAS A **CHANCE** ...WITH ARTIFICIAL RESPIRATION--PROVIDED I GIVE IT **FAST!**

USING EVERY SCINTILLA OF THE POWER LOCKED IN HIS INCREDIBLE FRAME, STRAINING TO OVERCOME WATER-RESISTANCE, THE BAT-MAN SMASHES THE CHAIR FORWARD ... AGAIN -- AND AGAIN..!

19

KA-WOOOSH

HE'S STRONGER THAN I GUESSED! HE IS BREATHING... HE'LL BE OKAY!...

...WHICH LEAVES ME FREE TO CONCENTRATE ON...

-- THE JOKER!

OHHH... BATMAN! I'VE SEEN YOU ANGRY LIKE THIS--OFTEN! NOBODY ALIVE CAN BEAT YOU WHEN THE ANGER IS UPON YOU!

YOU'LL GET NO BATTLE FROM ME! I MAY BE INSANE... BUT I'M NOT CRAZY!

SO I'LL RUN AWAY-- AND LIVE TO PUT EGG ON YOUR FACE ANOTHER DAY!

OUTSIDE, THERE IS DAWN... AND DESPERATION...

HE HASN'T LOST ANY OF HIS CUNNING! HE HAS A GETAWAY CAR ...WITH BALLOON TIRES FOR RIDING ON SAND!

HE REACHES IT AND... HE'S GONE!

20

THE NIGHT HAS TAKEN ITS TOLL ON ME... THE BLOWS TO THE HEAD... THE BATTLE IN THE AQUAR-IUM--
I CAN'T GET UP TO FULL SPEED--
--AND HE HAS A BIG START!
21

BUT... WITHIN YARDS OF FREEDOM, THE FLEEING MADMAN SLIPS...

...FALLS!

FRANTIC, HE RISES... TO BE CONFRONTED BY A PILLAR OF GREY RAGE--

IT'S OVER, JOKER!-- FINISHED!

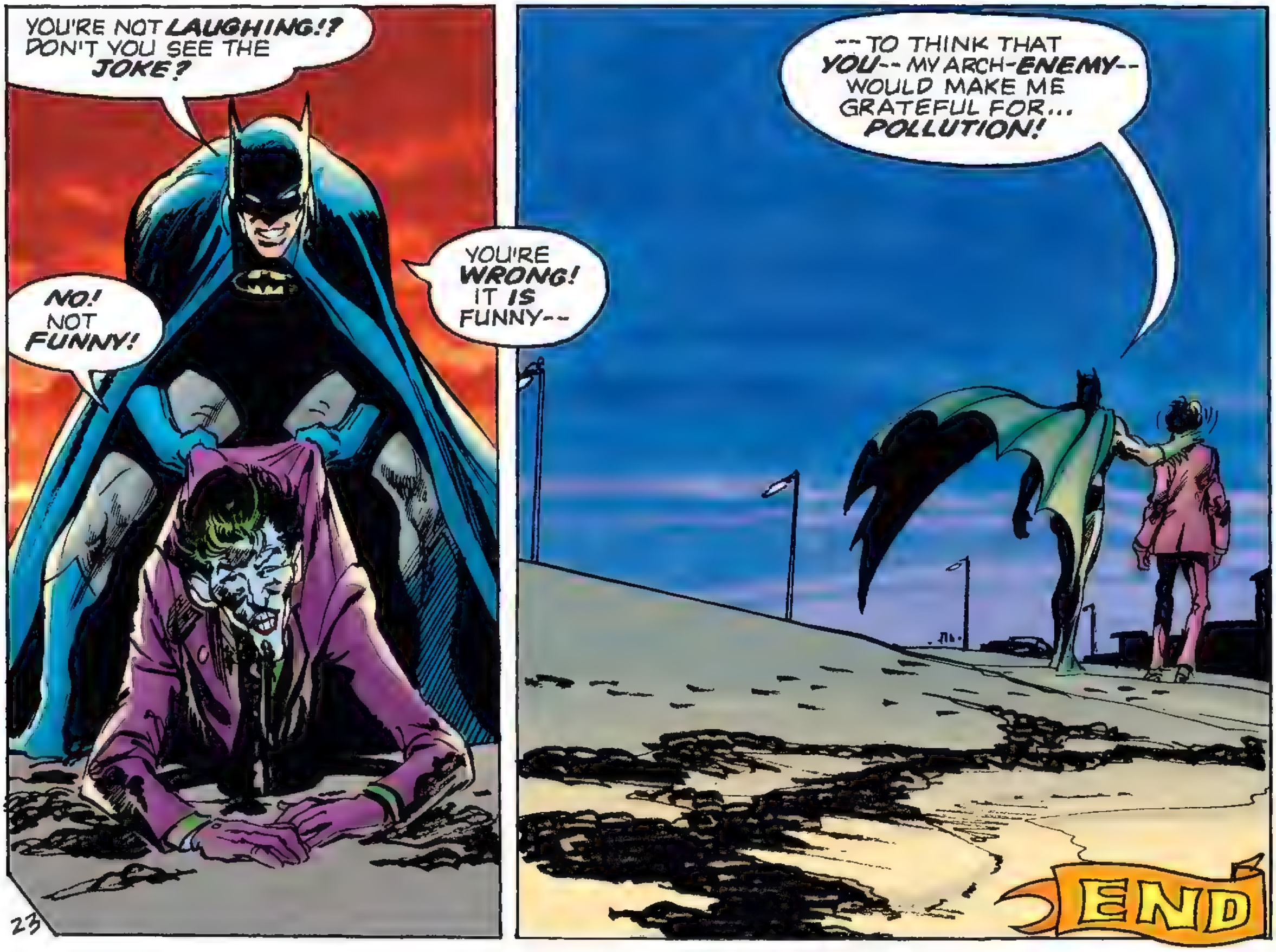
THEY'RE GOING TO PUT YOU PRECISELY WHERE YOU BELONG-- IN A PADDED CELL! AND I HOPE THEY LOSE THE KEY!

N-NOT FAIR! I WAS SO CLOSE-- UH!

YOU WOULD'VE ESCAPED, ALL RIGHT-- EXCEPT FOR THE OIL SLIME ON THE BEACH!

YOU SLIPPED ON IT... AND YOU'LL GO ON SLIPPING-- TO THAT CELL!

22


YOU'RE NOT LAUGHING!? DON'T YOU SEE THE JOKE?
NO! NOT FUNNY!
YOU'RE WRONG! IT IS FUNNY--
--TO THINK THAT YOU-- MY ARCH-ENEMY-- WOULD MAKE ME GRATEFUL FOR... POLLUTION!
23
END

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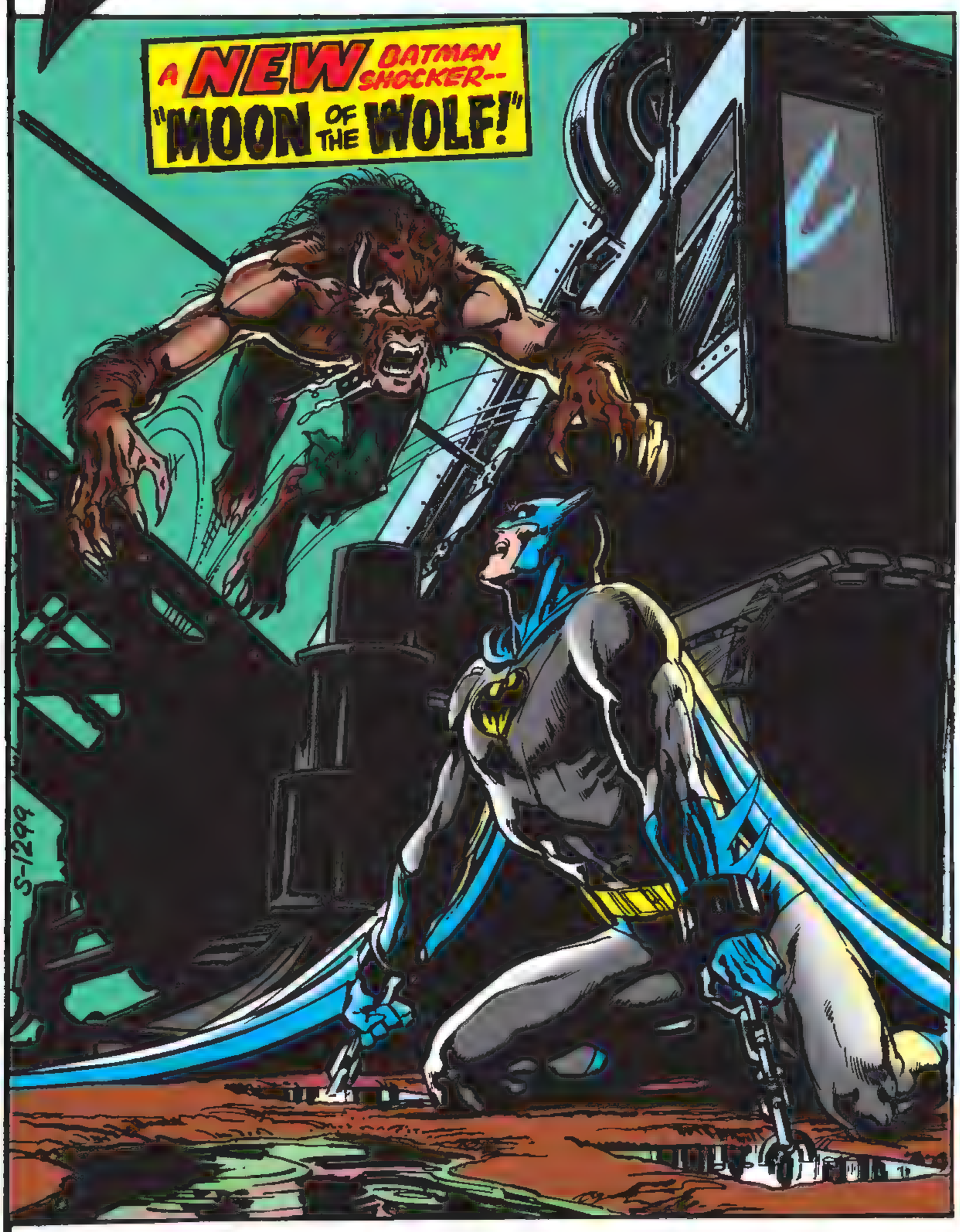
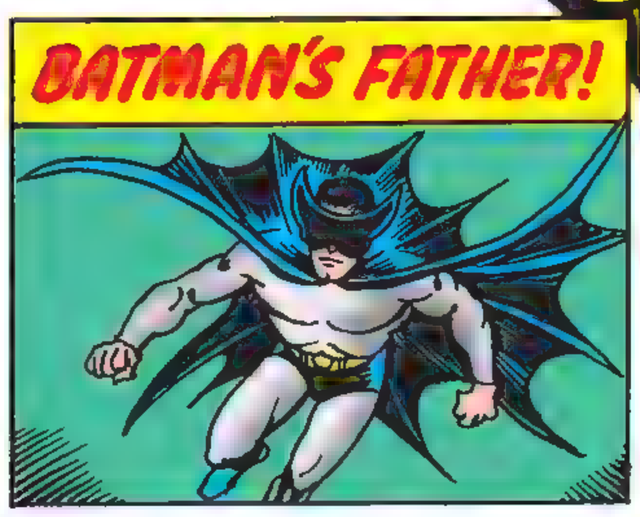
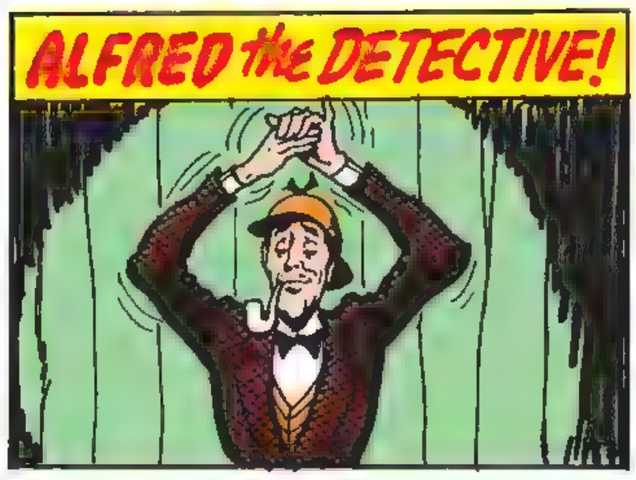
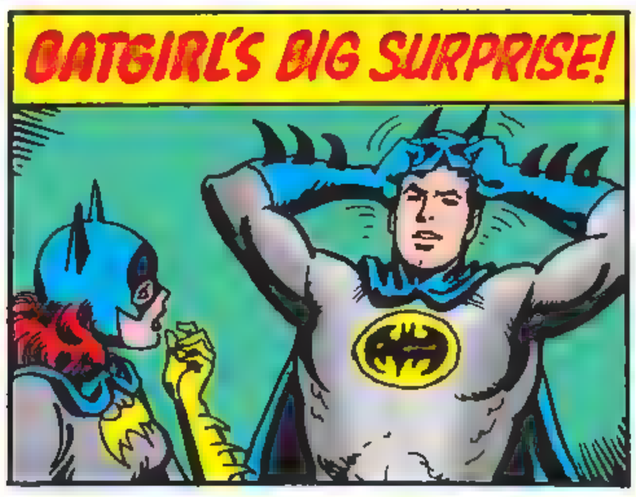
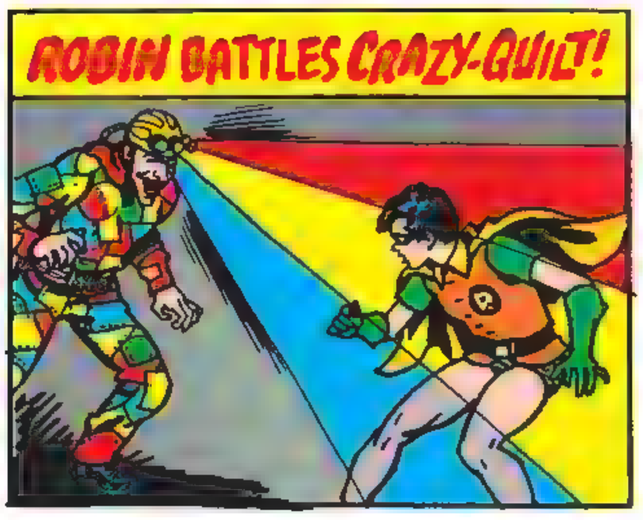










GOTHAM AFTER DARK- THE CITY CLOSES **MOST** OF ITS MULTI-MILLION EYES AND SETTLES INTO **SLEEP...**

IN COUNTLESS CLUTTERED APARTMENTS ACROSS THE SPRAWLING METROPOLIS, THIS ALL-TOO-FAMILIAR SCENE IS BEING **ECHOED...**

ENTER **JANET BONNER,** TWENTY-THREE, SECRETARY, SINGLE, PREPARING TO **REST** AFTER A BUSY WORKING DAY...

BUT THERE ARE THOSE WHOSE WORKING DAY IS ONLY **BEGINNING...** THOSE WHO NEED THE **DARKNESS** TO PERFORM THEIR CHOSEN TASKS...

ENTER A **VILLAIN:** AGE UNKNOWN, OCCUPATION OBVIOUS, PREPARING TO **DESERVE** HIS SINISTER DESIGNATION...

AND LASTLY, ENTER THE DREAD...

BATMAN

...WHO WILL ATTEMPT TO **DEFEAT** SAID VILLAIN--AND WILL FIND HIMSELF THRUST INTO A **NIGHTMARE** OF MONSTROUS DESIGN BENEATH THE...

Moon of the Wolf

LEN WEIN: WRITER
NEAL ADAMS, DICK GIORDANO: ARTISTS
JULIUS SCHWARTZ EDITOR

'TIS SAID THAT IT TAKES A *SPECIAL* KIND OF TALENT TO SURVIVE IN YOUR MODERN CITY... A MIXTURE OF SHEER NERVE, ANIMAL CUNNING, AND A CASUAL ACCEPTANCE OF THE OTHERWISE UNBELIEVABLE...

IF SO, JANET BONNER POSSESSES ALL OF THESE QUALITIES... AND *MORE*!

NOW I'VE SEEN *EVERYTHING!* A BURGLAR IN A *HALLOWEEN* SUIT!

SIC 'IM, RALPH... *SIC 'IM!*

THE GUARD DOG IS TRAINED TO RESPOND TO *COMMAND*... TO PROTECT ITS MASTER AT ALL COSTS...

AND THOUGH THE DOG IS *GOOD* AT ITS JOB...

...VERY, *VERY* GOOD AT ITS JOB...

KRAK

IT IS STILL NO *MATCH* FOR THE SHAGGY HORROR WHO SNAPS ITS SPINE... THEN DISCARDS THE BROKEN BODY IN FAVOR OF *LIVING* THINGS...

NO... *NO!* STAY *BACK*... KEEP *AWAY* FROM ME!

YOU *HEARD* THE LADY, CRUD... SHE WANTS YOU TO KEEP YOUR *DISTANCE*!

THE... *BATMAN...?*

TIME FOR *FORMAL* INTRODUCTIONS LATER, MISS.. AFTER FUZZ-FACE HERE HAS BEEN ESCORTED DOWNTOWN AND *BOOKED*!

THAT IS, OF COURSE, IF HE HAS NO *OBJECTIONS*..?

FOR A MOMENT, THE BESTIAL INTRUDER HESITATES, HIS FERAL EYES DARTING FROM HIS ALMOST-*VICTIM* TO THE *CAPED CRUSADER*...

WHA..?

...THEN, SUDDENLY... HE *MOVES*!

...AND MOVES WITH A *VENGEANCE*!

GOOD GOD... HE'S THROWN HER *OUT*! THERE'S *NOTHING* TO BREAK HER FALL...

...EXCEPT *ME*!

GOT HER.. AND ABOUT *HALF* A CHANCE TO AVOID SPLATTERING ON THE STREET!

UUNNGG... BATARANG SLOWED US DOWN ENOUGH TO SAVE US...

...BUT MY ARM FEELS DISLOCATED!

BOOT-SHOD FEET TOUCH SOLID GROUND... AND INSTANTS LATER...

SHE'S ALL RIGHT... JUST FAINTED FROM THE SHOCK!

AND, BY NOW, HER FURRY ATTACKER HAS CERTAINLY FLED...

...ALL OF WHICH LEAVES ME WHERE?

THAT HAIRY CHARACTER MAY HAVE ESCAPED ME THIS TIME... BUT I LAY ODDS WE'LL MEET AGAIN!

THERE'S MORE TO THAT MANIAC THAN MEETS THE EYE!

FORTY-SIX MINUTES LATER, HALF-WAY ACROSS **GOTHAM**, THE HARSH GLARE OF COMMISSIONER GORDON'S DESK LAMP ILLUMINATES A FAMILIAR DARK-CLAD FORM...

BATMAN! GOOD LORD, MAN, WHAT HAPPENED TO YOU? YOU LOOK LIKE YOU'VE BEEN PUT THROUGH A *CEMENT-MIXER!*

NOTHING SO **GRAPHIC**, COMMISSIONER! JUST HAD A-- ***FALLING OUT*** WITH SOME LUNATIC SECOND-STORY MAN ACROSS TOWN!

AMAZING! AN EVERYDAY BURGLAR GIVING ***YOU*** PROBLEMS?

NOTHING **"EVERYDAY"** ABOUT HIM, SIR... UNLESS YOU KNOW A DOZEN ***OTHER*** GUYS WHO BREAK INTO APARTMENTS MASQUERADING AS A **WOLF--!**

W...WOLF?! YOU'RE...

NO... IT'S JUST ***TOO MUCH*** TO BE A ***COINCIDENCE!***

WHAT IS, COMMISSIONER?

YOUR **WOLF-MAN...** REMINDED ME OF A ***THEFT*** SEVERAL WEEKS AGO FROM THE ***GOTHAM PARK ZOO!*** IT SEEMS SOMEONE GOT AWAY WITH A PAIR OF... ***ALASKAN TIMBER WOLVES!***

MAYBE I'M GETTING **OLD**... BUT MY COP'S INSTINCTS TELL ME THAT, IN SOME STRANGE FASHION, OUR TWO CASES ARE ***RELATED!***

I AGREE, SIR... BUT A MORE ***FRIGHTENING*** THOUGHT HAS JUST OCCURRED TO ME...

WHAT IF OUR WOLF-LIKE PROWLER IS ***NOT*** WEARING A ***MASK?***

GOTHAM'S GRIMY LOWER-EAST SIDE ... WHERE LANDMARKS OF THE FUTURE RISE FROM THE RUBBLE OF THE PAST ...

IN THE FRAGILE MOMENTS BEFORE THE REBIRTH OF DAWN, A SOLITARY FIGURE LOPES THROUGH THE TWISTING SHADOWS ...

... THEN PAUSES BEFORE THE DIRT-STREAKED WINDOW OF A DIMLY-LIT PHARMACY AND ...

RREEEEEK

AH, MY FRIEND, YOU'VE RETURNED ...

... AND JUST UNDER THE WIRE!

COME ON ... DON'T BE SO MELODRAMATIC!

IN PRECISELY SEVEN SECONDS, THE MOON WILL BE DOWN ...

RRRRAAAARRRGGGHHHHH

... AND ALL ...

... YOUR FEARSOME ...

... GROWLING WON'T ...

... MEAN A ...

... DAMNED THING!

THERE... **NORMAL** ONCE AGAIN! THAT'S **MUCH** BETTER... ISN'T IT, ANTHONY? CARE FOR A CUP OF **TEA**?

COME **OFF** IT, MILO! THERE'S ONLY **ONE** THING I WANT FROM YOU... AND YOU **KNOW** WHAT IT IS!

A **CURE**, ANTHONY? OF **COURSE**... WHEN YOU'VE **EARNED** IT!

CURSE YOU, MILO... DON'T **TAUNT** ME! HAVEN'T I SUFFERED **ENOUGH**?

WHAT DID I EVER **DO** IN MY LIFE TO **DESERVE** THIS NIGHTMARE?

REALLY, ANTHONY... YOU KNOW THE ANSWER AS WELL AS **I** DO! **THINK** FOR A MOMENT... AND I'M CERTAIN IT WILL ALL COME **BACK** TO YOU!

MEMORY: YOU ARE **ANTHONY LUPUS**, OLYMPIC DECATHLON SENSATION OF A FEW YEARS PAST... WHO HAD DEVOTED HIS YOUTH TO ACHIEVING JUST SUCH A **TRIUMPH**...

AND, DESPITE THE YOUNG MAN'S MOST FERVENT WISHES, THE MEMORIES **DO** COME BACK, INDEED...

...FOR WITH ATHLETIC SUCCESS COMES FINANCIAL GOOD FORTUNE... AND ASSORTED **OTHER** FRINGE BENEFITS... JUST AS TONY LUPUS HAD **KNOWN** IT WOULD...

...AND, FOR A WHILE, HE WALLOWED IN THE **LUXURY** HE'D SCHEMED A LIFETIME TO ATTAIN... UNTIL THE **HEADACHES** BEGAN...

"THERE IS NO PHYSIOLOGICAL *CAUSE* FOR THESE HEADACHES," SAID ONE DOCTOR AFTER ANOTHER...

...BUT ANTHONY LUPUS WAS AN *OBSTINATE* MAN... AND THERE WERE MANY *OTHER* DOCTORS IN *GOTHAM*...

...AND WHEN, INEVITABLY, THERE WERE NO *LONGER* OTHER DOCTORS, THERE WERE, INSTEAD, THE HEALERS... THE MIRACLE MEN... THE *QUACKS*...

FINALLY, THERE WAS... *MILO*!

MILO'S POTIONS AND BREWS TASTED NO LESS *FOUL* THAN THOSE OF HIS PREDECESSORS...

...BUT THEY WERE INFINITELY MORE *EFFECTIVE*!

...FOR MILO'S MINISTRATIONS SOMEHOW *RELIEVED* ANTHONY LUPUS' CONSTANT AGONY, *CLEARED* HIS PAIN-RACKED MIND...

...UNTIL, AT MONTH'S END, WHEN THE MOON ROSE *FULL* ONCE MORE...

...AND, IN HORROR, TONY LUPUS LEARNED THAT MILO'S ELIXIRS HAD MERELY EXCHANGED *ONE* KIND OF TORMENT FOR *ANOTHER*, FAR MORE *HIDEOUS*...

WHEN THE SUN ROSE AND THE TRANSFORMATION FADED INTO DREAM, THERE WERE **ANSWERS** TO BE FOUND...

MILO... YOUR SERUMS... THE MOON... TH-THEY **CHANGED** ME SOMEHOW... THEY...

IN HEAVEN'S NAME, MAN... WHAT HAVE YOU **DONE** TO ME?

REALLY, MR. LUPUS... NO NEED TO BE **UPSET**! IN FACT, YOU SHOULD BE **PROUD**!

YOU'RE ONE-IN-A **MILLION**, MR. LUPUS... **ANTHONY**! MY EXAMINATIONS HAVE SHOWN YOU SUFFER FROM QUITE A RARE DISEASE... **LYCANTHROPY**!

A CONDITION MORE COMMONLY KNOWN AS... **WEREWOLFISM**!

OH, **OTHER** PEOPLE HAVE IT... THOSE WITH OVERLY-BUSHY **EYEBROWS**... PARTICULARLY HAIRY **HANDS**... BUT FEW HAVE AS **INTENSE** A CASE AS **YOU**!

YOUR **HEADACHES** BENEATH THE FULL MOON INDICATED THE DISEASE HAD GROWN **STRONGER** WITHIN YOU AS YOU REACHED **MATURITY**!

...AND THE **SERUMS** YOU CONSUMED... EXTRACTED BY ME FROM THE BLOOD OF ALASKAN TIMBER WOLVES... **ACCELERATED** THE PROCESS... BRINGING YOU TO THE **FINAL** STAGES FEW OTHERS EVER REACH...

...TURNING YOU, IN EFFECT, INTO A **WEREWOLF**!

BUT **WHY**, MILO... **WHY**??

WHY? BUT, ANTHONY... IT'S REALLY QUITE **SIMPLE**!

I WANT YOU TO **MURDER** SOMEONE FOR ME!

I WANT YOU TO KILL... **THE BATMAN**!

THE ... BATMAN? MILO ... YOU'RE INSANE!

OF ALL THE PEOPLE ON THIS BLESSED EARTH, WHY ... HIM?

BECAUSE I OWE HIM, ANTHONY ... FOR THE YEARS SPENT ROTTING BEHIND PRISON WALLS ... FOR THE FAILURES I'VE BEEN FORCED TO ENDURE ON HIS ACCOUNT ...! *

* AS RELATED IN "THE MAN WHO ENDED BATMAN'S CAREER" (DETECTIVE COMICS #247) & "AM I REALLY BATMAN?" (BATMAN #112)

YES, ANTHONY ... I OWE HIM ... AND YOU ARE GOING TO SETTLE MY ACCOUNT ...

... IF YOU EVER HOPE TO GAIN A CURE FROM ME!

A CURE? THANK HEAVEN!

MILO, PLEASE ... YOU'VE GOT TO GIVE IT TO ME!

MATCH THE MEMORY AGAINST THE REALITY, AND YOU'LL FIND THE SITUATION HASN'T REALLY CHANGED ...

MILO, PLEASE ... YOU'VE GOT TO GIVE ME THAT CURE!

YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND, MAN ... MY BESTIAL PERSONALITY GROWS MORE POWERFUL WITH EVERY TRANSFORMATION!

TONIGHT I ALMOST KILLED SOMEONE!

IF YOU REALLY WANT MY ANTIDOTE, ANTHONY ... YOU WILL KILL SOMEONE ...

... AND YOU KNOW WHO!

MILO, BE REASONABLE! THE BATMAN IS NOT A FOOL!

DO YOU HONESTLY EXPECT HIM TO WALK CALMLY INTO THE WEREWOLF'S DEN AND OFFER HIMSELF UP AS A SACRIFICE FOR MY SALVATION?

IN A WAY, ANTHONY ... IN A WAY!

BUT IT IS NOT YOUR SHAGGY ALTER EGO WHO WILL LEAD THAT COSTUMED CAVALIER TO HIS DOOM!

NO, I BELIEVE THAT IS MORE OF A TASK FOR ANTHONY LUPUS HIMSELF!

NO, MILO ... NO!

BUT A SHORT WHILE LATER, DESPITE TONY LUPUS' PROTESTS...

HAVEN'T SEEN **YOU** AROUND THE CLUB IN WEEKS, TONY... HOW'VE THINGS BEEN **GOING**?

PASSING FAIR, BRUCE... I'VE BEEN REASSESSING MY TAX STRUCTURE... TRYING TO PICK OUT A NEW LOOPHOLE OR TWO! YOU KNOW HOW IT IS!

HERE, AMOS... **CATCH!**

...AND DID YOU **FIND** ONE WORTH MENTIONING?

THE **BAT**... ⇒HUFF⇐ **MAN**?... ⇒PUFF⇐ BUT HE'S TOO... ⇒HUFF⇐ **HONEST** TO GO FOR... ⇒PUFF⇐ ANY KIND OF... ⇒HUFF⇐ **TAX DODGE**! ⇒PUFF⇐

...MATTER OF FACT, I **DID**! ONLY THING I NEED NOW TO MAKE IT WORK IS... **THE BATMAN**!

THERE'S NOTHING **ILLEGAL** ABOUT MY "TAX DODGE," AMOS!

I MERELY PROPOSE TO CONTRIBUTE A QUARTER OF A MILLION DOLLARS TO THE CHARITY OF HIS CHOICE...

...**IF THE BATMAN** WILL COME TO MY HOME TO COLLECT THE CHECK **PERSONALLY**! I'VE ALWAYS WANTED TO **MEET** THE MAN!

THAT SOUNDS **REASONABLE** ENOUGH, TONY! WHAT SEEMS TO BE YOUR **PROBLEM**?

PLEASE, ERNST ⇒**UUNNF**!⇐ A LITTLE **GENTLER** IF YOU WOULD...

PROBLEM? YOU'VE GOT TO BE **KIDDING**, BRUCE! YOU EVER TRY **FINDING THE BATMAN**?

HE'S NOT EXACTLY LISTED IN THE **YELLOW PAGES**, YOU KNOW...

OOFF! UNNH! UUNNG!

I WOULDN'T **WORRY** ABOUT IT, TONY! ONCE **THE BATMAN** GETS WIND OF AN OFFER LIKE **YOURS**...

...I THINK HE'LL FIND **YOU**!

AAHHH...NOTHING LIKE A GOOD WORKOUT TO MAKE A MAN FEEL IN THE PINK AGAIN! INVIGORATING... MOST INVIGORATING!

MEN'S CLUB

AND NOT TOO MUCH LATER...

WHO--? THE-- B-BATMAN!

AFTERNOON, MR. LUPUS! I HEAR YOU *HAVE* SOMETHING FOR ME!

OH, YES-- *THAT!* PLEASE JOIN ME IN MY STUDY AND I'LL WRITE YOU A *CHECK!*

THERE, NOW. AS LONG AS THIS DOOR IS CLOSED, WE WON'T BE *DISTURBED!*

WOULD YOU CARE FOR A *DRINK, BATMAN?*

NO-- THANK YOU! SUPPOSE WE JUST ATTEND TO THE REASON I'M HERE!

YES, OF COURSE-- MY *CONTRIBUTION!*

I WANT YOU TO *KNOW, BATMAN,* THAT I MAKE YOU THIS GIFT NOT ONLY TO ALLEVIATE MY FINANCIAL SITUATION--

--BUT IN THE SPIRIT OF UNIVERSAL BROTHERHOOD THAT MAKES ALL MEN--

IS IT GETTING-- *HOT* IN HERE?

HOT? WHY, NO-- I DON'T BELIEVE SO, *BATMAN!*

NOW, AS I WAS SAYING, THIS CONTRIBUTION IS MADE IN THE NAME OF...

IT *IS* HOT-- GETTING HOTTER! THERE'S SOMETHING WRONG WITH-- THE *AIR* IN THIS ROOM! IT'S-- *OF COURSE!*

THIS ROOM-- NO WINDOWS-- DOOR SEALED SHUT-- IS FILLED WITH *GAS!*

DON'T KNOW *WHY*-- YOU SET UP *TRAP* FOR ME-- BUT YOU'RE *NOT* GOING TO...

--NOT GOING TO-- *MAKE* IT...

I'M SORRY I HAD TO **DO** THAT TO YOU, **BATMAN**-- I TRULY **AM**--

--BUT YOU **SHOULD** HAVE ACCEPTED THE **DRUGGED DRINK!**

AND WHEN NEXT WE JOIN THE DEJECTED ANTHONY LUPUS, IT IS VERY NEARLY **DUSK** ...

QUICKLY, ANTHONY-- COME IN AND SHUT THE **DOOR**! YOU'RE LETTING IN THE **RAIN**!

INTENTIONALLY, MILO! MAYBE IT'LL MAKE ME FEEL A LITTLE **CLEANER** AFTER WHAT I'VE JUST DONE!

BUT, ANTHONY--YOU HAVEN'T REALLY **DONE** ANYTHING YET!

GRANTED, WE'VE SET EVERYTHING **UP**--BUT YOU'LL HAVE TO WAIT TILL MOON-RISE TO **COMPLETE** YOUR REQUIRED TASK!

THE CONSTRUCTION CREW GOES HOME **EARLY** HERE! THEY'LL NOT DISCOVER WHAT WILL BE **LEFT** OF **THE BATMAN** UNTIL TOMORROW MORNING!

I DO SO HOPE HE **AWAKENS** BEFORE MOONRISE! I WANT HIM TO **SEE** THE END COMING!

YEAH-- AN END YOU EXPECT **ME** TO DELIVER! MILO, YOU'RE A WORSE **ANIMAL** THAN **I** TURN INTO!

REALLY, ANTHONY-- I WOULD THINK YOU'D BE **GLAD** TO KILL THE **BATMAN!** AFTER ALL, WERE IT NOT FOR **HIM**, I WOULD NEVER HAVE HAD **CAUSE** TO DO WHAT I HAVE **DONE** TO YOU!

STILL, IN A SHORT WHILE, IT WILL ALL BE **PAST HISTORY**--

-- AND, AT LAST, I WILL BE FREE TO GIVE YOU THE **ANTIDOTE** YOU SEEK!

PLEASE, MILO-- I CAN'T **WAIT** THAT LONG! I NEED IT **NOW!**

EVEN A **LITTLE** OF IT-- TO HELP ME **CONTROL** THE WEREWOLF'S **FEROCITY!**

NO-- NOT A **DROP!** I WANT THE WEREWOLF'S **FULL** SAVAGE FURY UNLEASHED AGAINST **THE BATMAN!**

NOTHING **LESS** WILL SATISFY ME!

MILO, YOU MADMAN-- DON'T YOU **UNDERSTAND**? IF MY PERSONALITY IS COMPLETELY **SUBMERGED** ...

--THERE'S NO TELLING **WHAT** THE **WEREWOLF** WILL DO--

--BUT I'M AFRAID--

--WE'RE GOING TO--

--FIND OUT! IT'S--

--TOO LATE!--

--MUCH TOO--

RRRAARRGGG!

GO ON, ANTHONY-- YOUR **VICTIM** AWAITS YOU IN THE DESERTED LOT ACROSS THE STREET! GO ON AND **KILL** HIM-- **KILL**--!

A-ANTHONY-- WHY ARE YOU **LOOKING** AT ME THAT WAY?

A SUDDEN **SHIVER** SCAMPERS UP **MILO'S** SPINE AS HE STARES INTO THE TRANSFORMED TONY LUPUS' BLAZING, FERAL EYES -- AND HE REALIZES HE HAS MADE A MOST DREADFUL **MISTAKE!**

NO, ANTHONY-- STAY **BACK!** **STAY BACK!**

H-HERE-- Y-YOU CAN **HAVE** THE ANTIDOTE! I GIVE IT TO YOU **GLADLY**--

--B-BUT DON'T **TOUCH** ME-- **PLEASE**-- DON'T TOUCH--

--MEEEAAARRGGH!

WHILE, ACROSS THE STREET, A DRIVING RAIN STIRS A BAT-CLOAKED FIGURE TO AWARENESS ONCE AGAIN...

:UUNNHH:-- DON'T KNOW WHAT LUPUS *DRUGGED* ME WITH-- BUT MY HEAD FEELS LIKE A HALF-CRAZED *RHINO* HAS BEEN DANCING ON--!

HEY-- WHAT *IS* THIS? *CHAINED*-- IN A *CONSTRUCTION SITE*--?

WHAT KIND OF WARPED *REASON* COULD LUPUS HAVE FOR DOING *THIS?*

I CAN FIGURE *THAT* AFTER I *FREE* MYSELF FROM THESE THINGS--

HAFTA PICK IT UP WITH MY *TEETH*-- BUT BEGGARS CAN'T BE *PARTICULAR!*

--AND I SPY A TWISTED *COTTER PIN* THAT SHOULD BE *PERFECT* TO HELP ME *UNLOCK* THEM!

GOT IT! TASTES *TERRIBLE*-- BUT I'M NOT GOING TO *EAT* IT-- JUST--

RRAAARRGGGH!

WHAT IN--?

HIM AGAIN?

IN SOME TWISTED FASHION, THIS IS BEGINNING TO MAKE *SENSE!*

THIS CHARACTER IS DEFINITELY **NOT** WEARING A **MASK**--

--AND I GET THE UNPLEASANT FEELING LUPUS SET ME UP TO BE ITS **DINNER!**

WELL, I HATE TO **DISAPPOINT** HIM...

--BUT I DON'T PLAN ON BEING THE **MAIN COURSE** ON ANYBODY'S... **UNNFF!**

AND HE WORKS **VERY** FAST INDEED--FOR THE **CAPED CRUSADER** HAS SPENT MANY HOURS FOR MANY YEARS LEARNING HOW TO PICK THE MOST COMPLICATED **LOCKS** WITH THE MOST OUTLANDISH **TOOLS**...

WHEW! -- IT **WORKED!** MY EARS ARE **RINGING** FROM THAT SHOT-- BUT **SHAGGY** FARED **WORSE!**

HE SHOULD STAY **DAZED** LONG ENOUGH FOR ME TO PICK THESE BLASTED LOCKS --IF I WORK **FAST!**

HE'S **UP** AGAIN-- IN LESS THAN **HALF** THE TIME I FIGURED!

--WHICH IS STILL TWO SECONDS **LONGER** THAN IT TOOK ME TO **FREE** MYSELF--

--AND **MOVE!**

DON'T KNOW **WHAT** THAT CREATURE IS-- WHERE IT **COMES** FROM-- BUT ITS ENDURANCE LEVEL IS **UNNATURAL!**

EITHER OF THE BLOWS I'VE DEALT IT WOULD PUT A **NORMAL** MAN OUT FOR **HOURS!**

THE BATMAN'S STIFF-FINGERED HAND MOVES WITH BLINDING SPEED...

BUT IF **SHAGGY'S** GONNA KEEP ON COMING, I'M GONNA KEEP ON **SLUGGING**--

-- AND A WELL-PLACED **KARATE CHOP** TO THE SIDE OF HIS HEAD SHOULD...

--BUT A FUR-COVERED **CLAW** MOVES FASTER!

AARGH-- HIS GRIP-- LIKE **STEEL!** CAN'T MOVE MY **ARM**--

-- AND HIS FREE HAND WILL TEAR ME **APART!**

HITTING HIM WITH EVERYTHING I'VE **GOT**--

--AND THE ONLY THING I'VE SUCCEEDED IN **DOING** IS...

--MAKING HIM **MAD!**

≡**UUNNGG**≡-- M-- MY **ARM!**

ARROOOOOOOOOOOO

THAT'S **TWICE** IN TWO DAYS HE'S COST ME THE USE OF AN ARM! IT'S **NUMB** FROM THE SHOULDER DOWN!

THIS IS **NO ORDINARY FOE** I'M FIGHTING! GOT TO STOP PLAYING BY THE **RULES** IF I WANT TO STAY **ALIVE!**

ON THE GROUND, HE HAS THE **ADVANTAGE** --HE'S **FASTER**-- **STRONGER**--

--BUT SUPPOSE WE TAKE THIS BRAWL INTO **MY** PLAYGROUND?

SUPPOSE WE TAKE...

...THIS BRAWL TO THE...

--**ROOFTOPS!**

IT IS NOT **EASY** TO CLIMB A STRUCTURE LIKE THIS WITH THE USE OF ONLY **ONE** ARM--

--AND YET THE **CAPED CRUSADER** SEEMS VIRTUALLY TO **GLIDE** UP THE SLEEK STEEL SKELETON, PAUSING ONLY TO NOTICE...

SHAGGY'S OUT OF SIGHT--

--BUT IT'S EVEN ODDS HE'S COMING AFTER ME SOMEHOW!

BUT WHEN **THE BATMAN** ATTAINS THE STRUCTURE'S **SUMMIT**...

STILL **NOTHING**! WHERE IN BLAZES COULD **SHAGGY** HAVE **GONE**?

RRR RRRRR

UH-OH-- I'M SORRY I ASKED!

HE'S SMARTER THAN I GAVE HIM CREDIT FOR! CLIMBED UP THE OTHER SIDE OF THE BUILDING--TRIED TO TAKE ME BY SURPRISE--

--AND HE MIGHT HAVE SUCCEEDED-- IF HE'D KEPT HIS STUPID MOUTH SHUT!

BUT EVEN AS HE WHIRLS TO MEET THE ATTACK, THE BATMAN FALLS BENEATH ITS FULL SAVAGE FURY-- FURY BORN FROM THE BEAST'S SUBCONSCIOUS-- AND THE MANGLED MEMORY THAT THE CAPED ONE IS SOMEHOW RESPONSIBLE FOR ANTHONY LUPUS' CURRENT CONDITION...

--RESPONSIBLE FOR THE BITTER ANGUISH THE SHAGGY CREATURE FEELS--

--THE ANGUISH -- AND THE PAIN!

JUST ABOUT HAD IT! SHAGGY'S COMING AGAIN-- AND I HAVEN'T GOT THE STRENGTH TO STOP HIM-- UNLESS...

IT MAY BE BRUTAL -- BUT IT'S THE ONLY HOPE I'VE GOT!

AARRNN!

ONCE MORE, THE BEAST THAT IS ANTHONY LUPUS HURLS HIMSELF FORWARD-- ONLY TO BE STOPPED SUDDENLY, SICKENINGLY SHORT BY ANOTHER OBJECT HURLED...

BLASTED FOOL! I ONLY MEANT TO WING HIM WHERE HE STOOD-- BUT HE WALKED RIGHT INTO IT!

FOR A MOMENT, THE BEAST-MAN STANDS TREMBLING, WAITING FOR DEATH TO CLAIM HIM--

UNH!

THEN, SLOWLY, HE BEGINS TO REALIZE THAT HE FEELS NO WEAKNESS, NO PAIN-- THAT THE SHARP STEEL ROD WHICH PIERCED HIS FURRY FLESH HAS AFFECTED HIM NOT AT ALL --

-- AND, IF IT IS POSSIBLE FOR A BEAST TO **GRIN**, ANTHONY LUPUS DOES SO AS HE BEGINS TO PULL THE ROD **OUT**--

GOD!

AND WHEN THE **BATMAN** HAS DESCENDED TO THE STREET...

GONE! THE **ROD** IS HERE, TWISTED INTO RUIN-- BUT **SHAGGY** HAS **VANISHED!** WAS HE **DISINTEGRATED** BY THE LIGHTNING, OR--? WELL, I SUSPECT SOMEDAY I'LL **FIND OUT**--

--**ONE** WAY-- OR **ANOTHER!**

EPILOGUE:

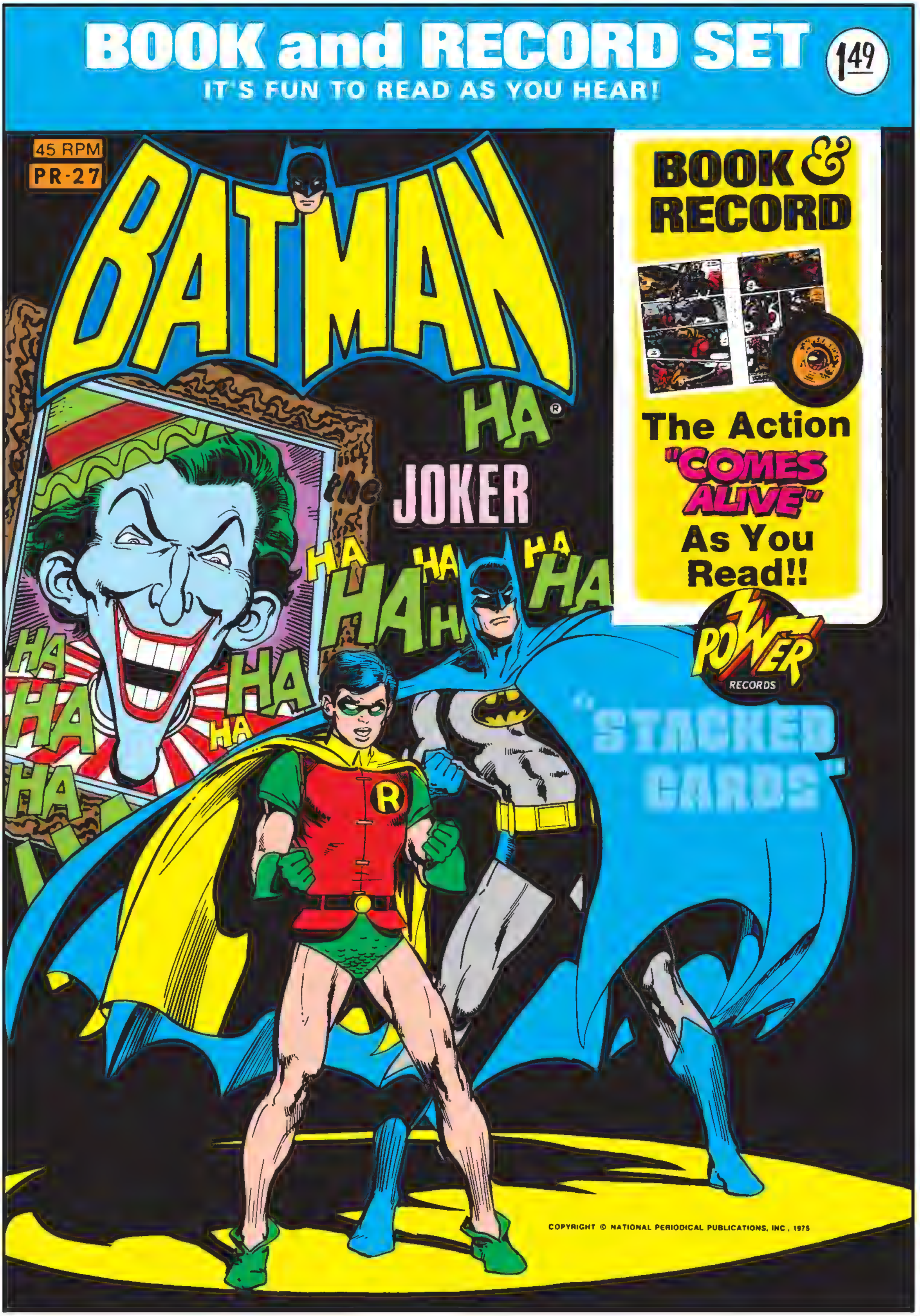
IN THE FORESTS OF **ALASKA**, THERE ARE STORIES OF A MAN-- THE **WOLFMAN**, THEY CALL HIM-- FOR HE HUNTS NOTHING **ELSE**,

FOR MOST OF THE MONTH, HE PROWLS THESE WOODLANDS, SLAYING THE TIMBER WOLVES, ANXIOUSLY EXTRACTING THEIR BLOOD--

-- BUT, ON THE THREE NIGHTS OF THE COLD **FULL MOON**, IT IS SAID THE WOLF-PACK STILL RUNS **THICKER**-- BY **ONE**-- AND THAT ONE HAS THE SHAPE OF-- A **MAN!**

The End

N·680


BOOK and RECORD SET
1.49
IT'S FUN TO READ AS YOU HEAR!
45 RPM
PR-27
BATMAN
HA
the JOKER
HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA
BOOK & RECORD
The Action "COMES ALIVE" As You Read!!
POWER RECORDS
"STACKED CARDS"
R
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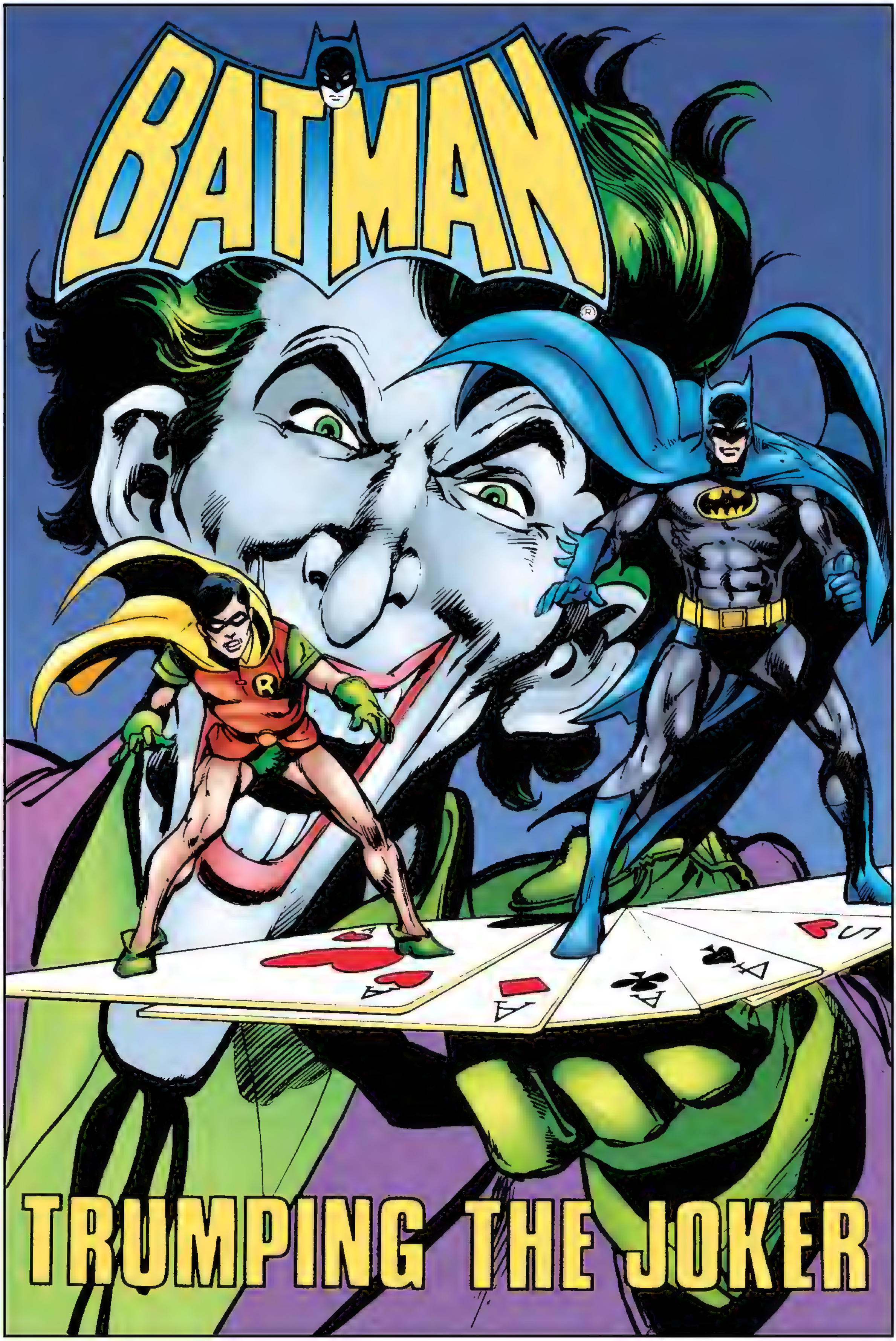

BATMAN
TRUMPING THE JOKER

WATCH OUT COMMISSIONER GORDON... ARE YOU HURT?

I'M ALL RIGHT, INSPECTOR MULLIGAN. SOMEONE JUST THREW A ROCK THRU THAT WINDOW.

SORRY ABOUT THAT, COMMISSIONER... YOU KNOW HOW IT IS WITH THESE VANDALS TODAY.

WELL, THAT... MULLIGAN... WAS NO ORDINARY VANDAL... WILL YOU PLEASE HAND ME THE NOTE THAT WAS TIED TO THE ROCK?

HERE YOU ARE, COMMISSIONER.

LISTEN TO THIS, MULLIGAN, I'LL READ IT TO YOU... IT SAYS: BATMAN AND ROBIN- I HAVE ESCAPED FROM ARKHAM ASYLUM AND REVENGE WILL BE SWEET! FREE ONCE AGAIN TO PURSUE MY DISHONORABLE PROFESSION.

IF YOU TRY TO PLAY YOUR HAND AGAINST MINE, YOU WILL FIND THE JOKER IS WILD. SIGNED, THE JOKER.

HA HA HA HA HA

THAT *IS* BAD NEWS, COMMISSIONER... I'LL PUT OUT A "306" AND ALERT THE ENTIRE GOTHAM POLICE FORCE. THE JOKER MUST BE APPREHENDED AND INCARCERATED. WHO KNOWS WHAT DASTARDLY CRIME HE MAY PERPETUATE NEXT.

VERY GOOD, MULLIGAN... A "306" WILL BE YOUR FIRST MOVE. NOW HAND ME THE HOT-LINE PHONE... BATMAN AND ROBIN MUST BE INFORMED OF THIS DIRE EMERGENCY THAT THREATENS GOTHAM CITY.

HELLO, COMMISSIONER GORDON... BATMAN HERE... YES... *THE JOKER ESCAPED?* ...NOTHING WE CAN DO NOW, COMMISSIONER, BUT KNOWING HOW THE JOKER OPERATES... HE'LL BE CONTACTING YOU VERY SHORTLY...

...I'LL BE WAITING NEAR THE HOT-LINE TO HEAR FROM YOU AS TO FURTHER DEVELOPEMENTS... GOODBYE SIR.

HERE WE GO AGAIN, BATMAN...

THINGS WERE TOO QUIET FOR A WHILE. WHEN YOUR HOT-LINE RANG...I KNEW IT SPELLED TROUBLE.

WELL... I THINK WE'LL GET A LITTLE ACTION NOW.

RIGHT YOU ARE, ROBIN...

THE JOKER HAS ALWAYS BEEN A REAL CHALLENGE... WE'LL GET PLENTY OF ACTION IF MY MEMORY SERVES ME RIGHT...

HE'S A VERY CLEVER ARCH CRIMINAL WHO ***MUST*** BE PUT AWAY.

LIKE I SAID, COMMISSIONER... THE JOKER DOESN'T WASTE ANY TIME...

...THE GOTHAM CITY MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS?? WE'RE ON OUR WAY.

WHAT'S THE PITCH, BATMAN?

NO TIME FOR TALKING NOW, ROBIN...INTO THE BAT-MOBILE... I'LL TELL YOU ON THE WAY.

PLEASE BATMAN... CLUE ME IN ON WHAT'S HAPPENING.

WELL, ROBIN, WE'RE ON OUR WAY TO...THE GOTHAM MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS...THE JOKER SHOWED HIS HAND HE PROMISES TO STEAL THE FAMOUS PICASSO PAINTING OF "THE CLOWNS"...

THE MUSEUMS MOST VALUBLE POSSESSION.

EXACTLY, IT SEEMS THE "THE CLOWNS" IN THE PAINTING HAVE A SPECIAL FASINATION FOR THE JOKER.

HE WANTS TO "RESCUE" THEM FROM THE EYES OF THE CURIOUS WHO COME TO LAUGH AT THEIR IMAGE.

YOU KNOW BATMAN...THE JOKER REALLY BELONGS IN ARK. AM ASYLUM...HE'S A PARANOIAC WHO IS A MENACE TO OUR SOCIETY. MAYBE A FRONTAL LOBOTOMY MIGHT HELP IN HIS CASE.

QUICK, ROBIN...UP THE STEPS.

RIGHT BEHIND YOU, BATMAN.

THOOM

CAN I HELP YOU, GENTLEMEN?...OH MY WORD... IT'S YOU BATMAN AND ROBIN.

ALLOW ME TO INTRODUCE MYSELF... I AM HUNTINGTON WATERBURY... CURATOR OF GOTHAM CITY MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS. IS THERE SOMETHING WRONG, GENTLEMEN?

WE DON'T KNOW YET, SIR.

CAN YOU LEAD US TO THE PICASSO EXHIBIT?

I DON'T UNDERSTAND, BUT...PLEASE FOLLOW ME.

MR. WATERBURY, GOTHAM CITY'S POLICE DEPARTMENT RECEIVED A WARNING THAT THE JOKER HAS ESCAPED FROM ARKHAM ASYLUM. HE INTENDS TO STEAL PICASSO'S PAINTING OF "THE CLOWNS."

SEE FOR YOURSELF, BATMAN... IT'S THERE ON THE WALL...EVERYTHING SEEMS TO BE IN ORDER. I'LL DOUBLE THE SECURITY GUARDS... NOW THAT I KNOW OF THE THREAT...

OH, MY GOODNESS...

LOOK OVER THERE IN THE CORNER, BATMAN... ONE OF MY GUARDS IS LYING THERE WITH A GHOULISH GRIN ON HIS FACE.

I'M AFRAID THE POOR DEVIL IS DONE FOR, MR. WATERBURY.

ANOTHER INNOCENT VICTIM OF THIS HOMOCIDAL MANIAC...THE INSIDIOUS JOKER HAS BEEN HERE ALREADY. HE ALWAYS LEAVES HIS VICTIMS LAUGHING.

OHHH, POOR MR. WILSON ... HE WAS ONE OF MY BEST SECURITY MEN AND NOT TOO MANY YEARS FROM HIS RETIREMENT PENSION.

WHAT NOW, BATMAN?

EXAMINE THE PAINTING AGAIN MR. WATERBURY...

WHAT DO YOU SEE?

WHY--WHY... IT'S NOT THE REAL PICASSO! THIS IS A POOR COPY... THE REAL PICASSO MUST BE FOUND... PLEASE BATMAN... IT MUST NOT FALL INTO THE WRONG HANDS.

THIS IS A VERY CLEVER DELAYING TACTIC OF THE JOKER... TRYING TO FOOL US WHILE HE GETS AWAY WITH THE ORIGINAL...

EE EE EE WHREEEEEE

POLICE

MUSEUM

HELLO BATMAN...IS EVERYTHING ALL.RIGHT?

GLAD TO SEE YOU INSPECTOR MULLIGAN... YOU'RE JUST A LITTLE LATE...A GUARD HAS BEEN KILLED AND THE PICASSO IS MISSING.

R

THE ALLEDGED PERPETRATOR HAS TO BE THE JOKER!

GOOD THINKING MULLIGAN...NOW IF YOU WILL EXCUSE ME, ROBIN AND I ARE OFF TO PIER 47...THERE'S AN OLD ABANDONED WAREHOUSE THAT THE JOKER USED AS A HIDEOUT.

COME ROBIN... WE'LL TRY TO HEAD HIM OFF. YOU CAN FOLLOW US MULLIGAN.

VROOM

HEY, BATMAN, THINGS ARE REALLY COOKIN'. I WANTED ACTION AND THE JOKER IS GIVING IT TO US IN SPADES.

WELL, YOU ASKED FOR IT, ROBIN...

GREETING CARD CO.

STREEEE

OH WOW BATMAN, THIS PLACE GIVES ME THE CREEPS. ONLY A WEIRDO LIKE THE JOKER WOULD USE THIS DUMP FOR A HIDEOUT.

WE'VE GOT TO MOVE VERY QUIETLY ROBIN... THE JOKER IS IN HERE FOR SURE.

NOW WATCH YOUR STEP ROBIN DON'T TRIP ON ANYTHING.

THUD

OOPS... I TRIPPED BATMAN... LOOK... IT'S A BODY!

YES... A DEAD ONE.

LOOK AT HIS FACE ROBIN... THE GHOULISH GRIN... MUST BE THE NIGHT WATCHMEN... THE JOKER LEFT ANOTHER ONE OF HIS CALLING CARDS.

HA HA HA

BATMAN AND ROBIN... YOU REMEMBERED MY HIDEOUT... CURSE YOU... YOU'LL NEVER CATCH ME THIS TIME... HERE, HAVE A BLAST.

BANG

QUICK ROBIN, GET BEHIND THOSE CASES, I'M GOING AFTER THE JOKER...

... I'M GOING TO GIVE YOU A LESSON IN *ART*, JOKER... YOU'RE SUCH AN ART LOVER... I'LL SHOW YOU THE ART OF TRUMPING A JOKER WITH A HAND FULL OF CLUBS!

BANG BANG BANG BANG BANG

HA HA HA
YOU MISSED ME
JOKER...
...NOW YOUR
GUN IS EMPTY...
LOOKS LIKE YOU'LL
HAVE TO FIGHT ME
ON EVEN GROUND
YOU FIEND!

COME AND
GET ME BATMAN,
I CAN STILL USE
MY FISTS!

TAKE THAT BATMAN!

FOW

POW

HERE'S ONE FOR YOU ,JOKER.

ZAP

MANY HAPPY RETURNS!

HE'S GETTING AWAY BATMAN, HE'S RUNNING TOWARDS THE END OF THE PIER...

HOLY COW BATMAN...I SMELL SMOKE.

QUICK ROBIN, TURN IN THE FIRE ALARM... THIS MANIAC HAS SET FIRE TO THE WAREHOUSE... I'LL TAKE CARE OF HIM.

ALL RIGHT JOKER... I GOT YOU NOW! WHERE'S THE PICASSO?

NOT SO FAST BATMAN.

I'M DIVING OFF THIS PIER... AND WHEN I DO... YOU'LL NEVER CATCH ME...I WAS CAPTAIN OF SWIMMING TEAM AT ARKHAM. WANNA RACE? HERE GOES!

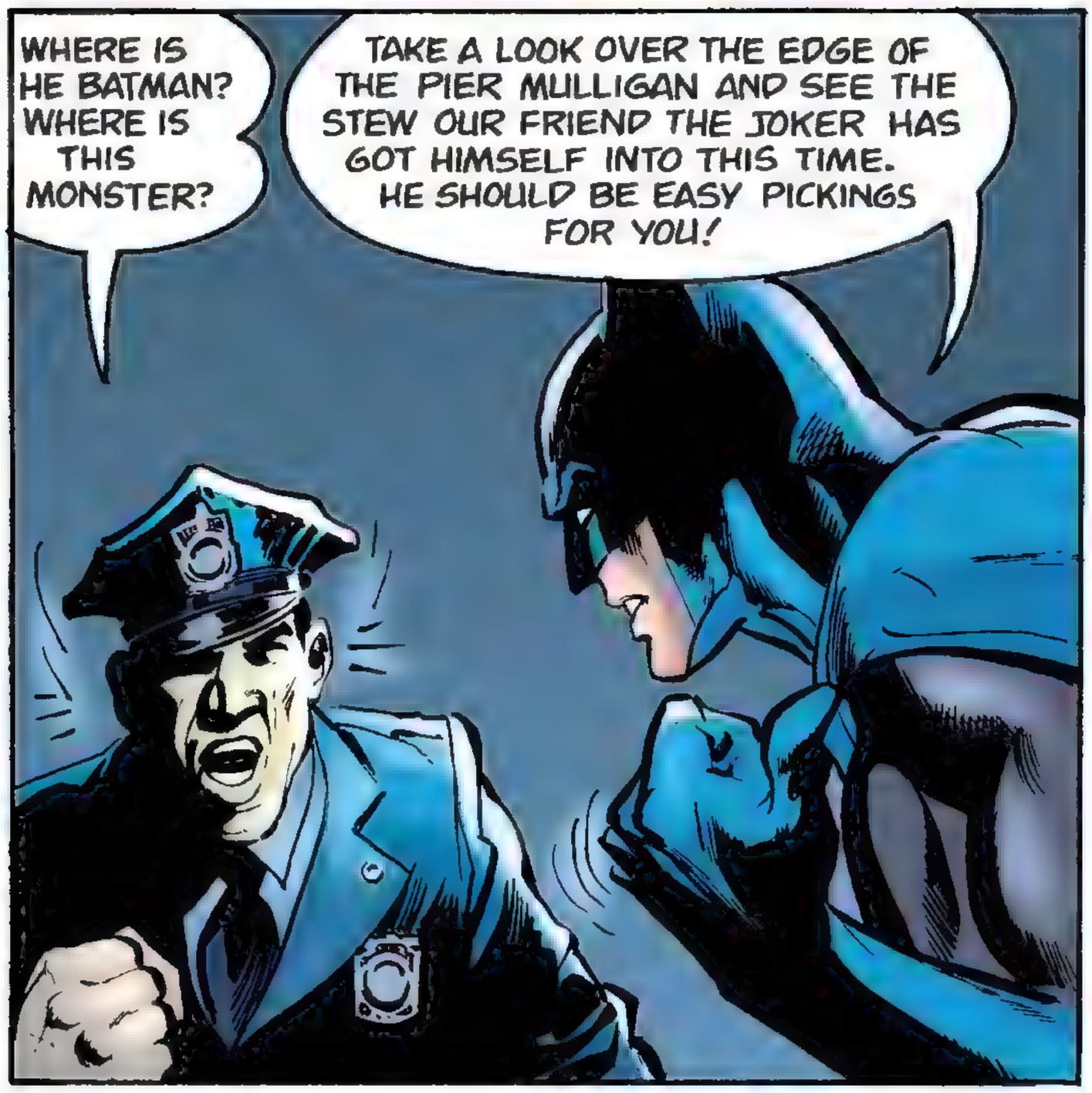
SPLOOCH

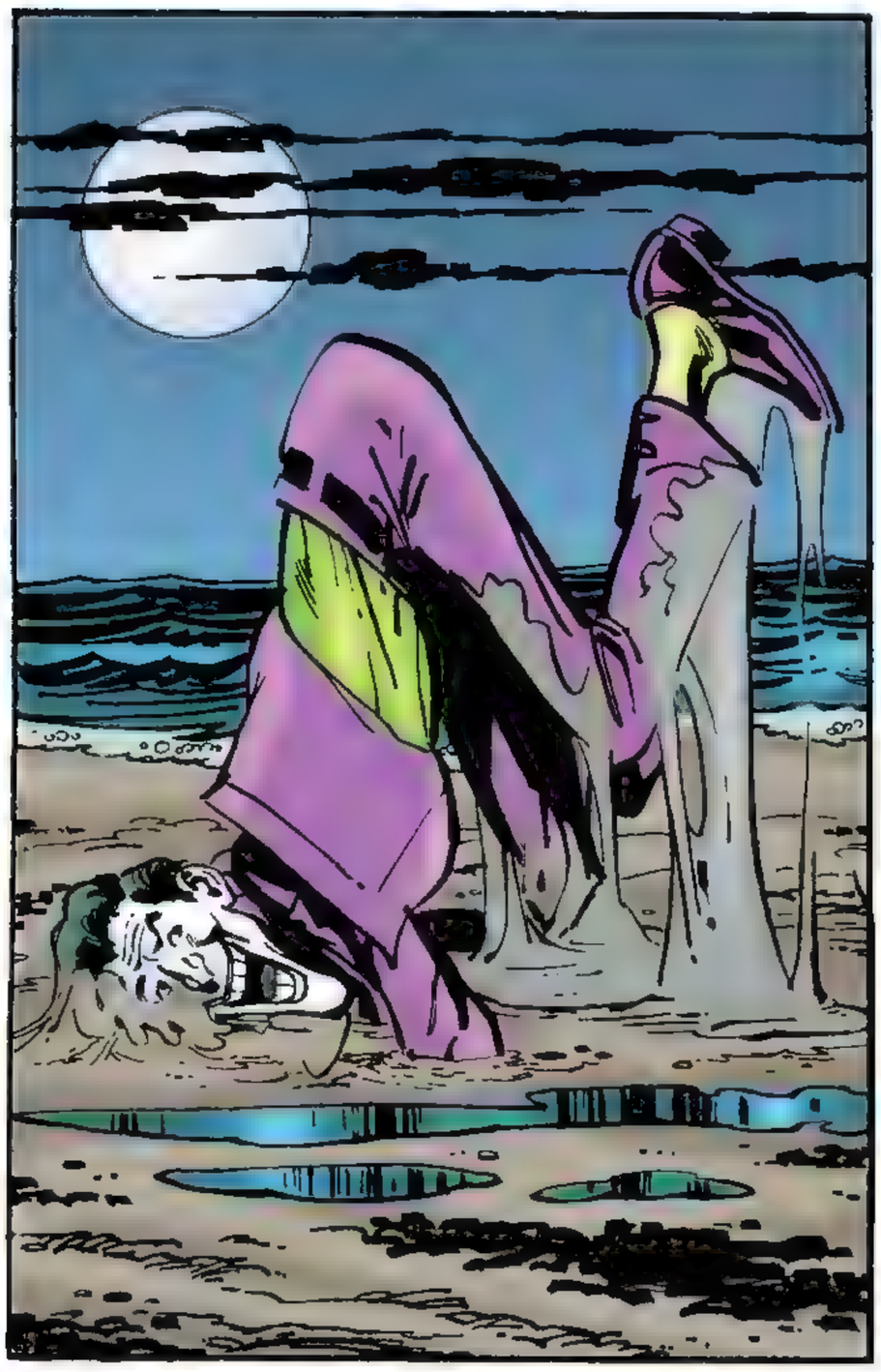
HELP ME BATMAN... I'M STUCK IN THE MUD DOWN HERE!

I FORGOT TO MENTION IT JOKER...

IT HAPPENS TO BE LOW TIDE...FOR A SLIMY CHARACTER LIKE YOU, YOU SHOULD FEEL RIGHT AT HOME.

WHEEEEEEEEEE!
KLOP KLOP KLOP
KLOP KLOP


WHERE IS HE BATMAN? WHERE IS THIS MONSTER?
TAKE A LOOK OVER THE EDGE OF THE PIER MULLIGAN AND SEE THE STEW OUR FRIEND THE JOKER HAS GOT HIMSELF INTO THIS TIME. HE SHOULD BE EASY PICKINGS FOR YOU!



ALL RIGHT BOYS... BRING A LADDER...GO DOWN AND GET HIM.

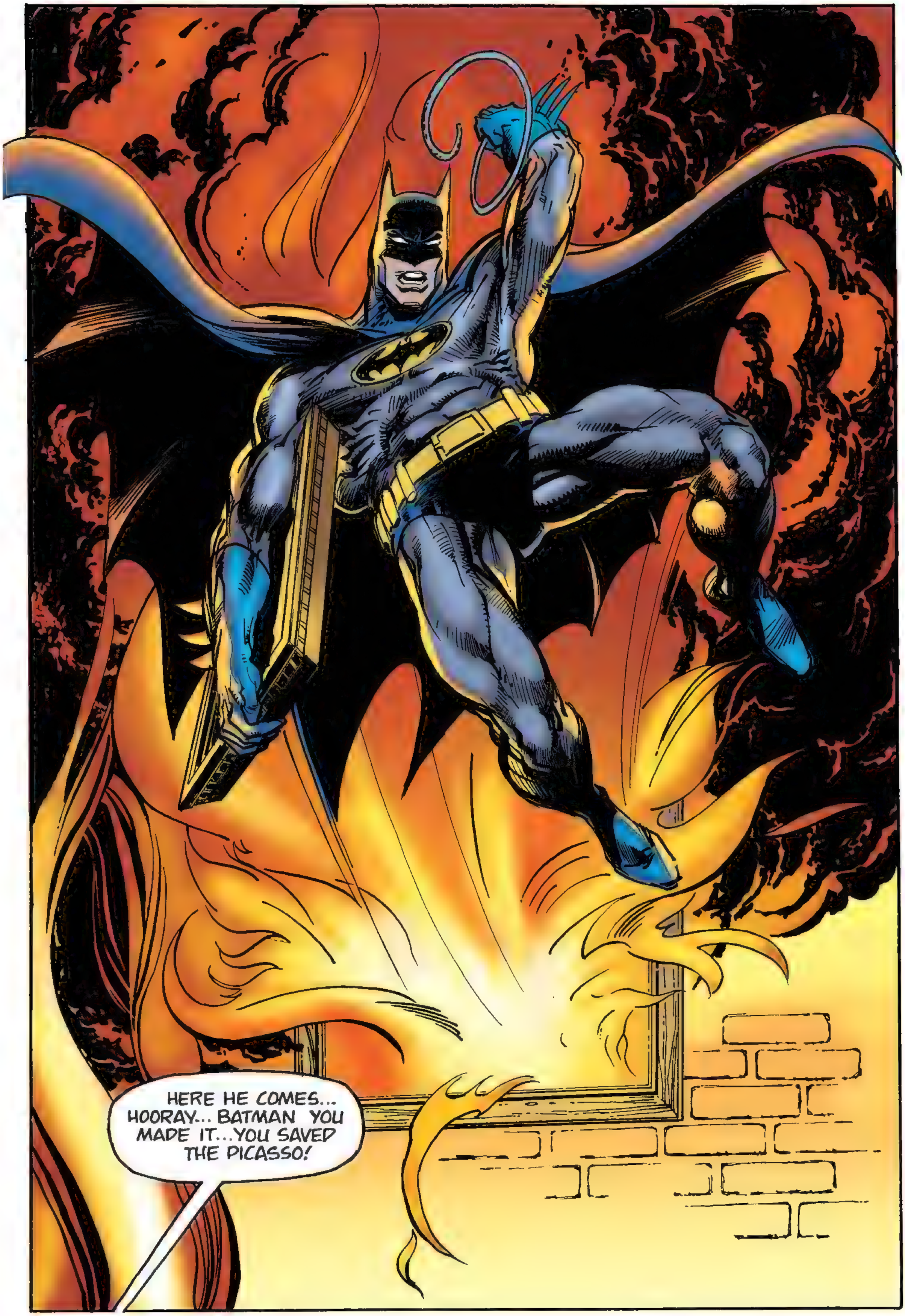
HERE COMES CHIEF MC NALLY AND THE GOTHAM CITY FIRE DEPARTMENT. I'M GOING INTO THE WAREHOUSE AND GET THE PICASSO.

COME BACK BATMAN_ BATMAN YOU CAN'T GO INTO THAT BLAZING INFERNO...

WATERBURY...WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?

DID I HEAR BATMAN JUST WENT INTO THAT BUILDING TO SAVE THE PICASSO? OH MY INSPECTOR MULLIGAN... DO YOU THINK HE'LL MAKE IT?

HE'S AN AMAZING INDIVIDUAL MR. WATERBURY... IF BATMAN SETS OUT TO DO SOMETHING, REST ASSURED IT WILL BE DONE.


HERE HE COMES... HOORAY... BATMAN YOU MADE IT...YOU SAVED THE PICASSO!

HERE YOU ARE MR. WATERBURY... THE REAL PICASSO... CAREFUL, IT'S A BIT WARM.

THANK HEAVENS YOU'RE SAFE BATMAN...

...OOH...THIS PICTURE IS HOT!... WHO CARES... IT'S SAFE... LET ME INSPECT IT MORE CAREFULLY... AHH... IT'S PERFECT...PERFECT. HOW CAN I THANK YOU ENOUGH BATMAN?

THE LOOK ON YOUR FACE WHEN BATMAN HANDED YOU THE PICASSO MR. WATERBURY, SAYS MORE THAN A THOUSAND WORDS...

SPEAKING FOR MYSELF AND ROBIN... I SHOULD LIKE TO SAY IT WAS DONE FOR THE TRUE LOVERS OF ART WHO APPRECIATE THE WORK OF A GENIUS...

...IF THIS ARCH CRIMINAL HAD GOTTEN AWAY WITH THE PAINTING... IT'S LOSS WOULD HAVE BEEN FELT BY POSTERITY!

ALL RIGHT BOYS, PUT THE CUFFS ON THE JOKER. BRING HIM DOWN TO THE STATION HOUSE.

HA HA... YOU MAY HAVE ME UNDER LOCK AND KEY FOR NOW, MULLIGAN. I PROMISE YOU SOMEDAY I'LL ESCAPE AGAIN. THEY CALL ME THE JOKER... BUT REMEMBER, IN THE GAME OF LIFE THE JOKER IS WILD.

GOODBYE FOR NOW BATMAN AND ROBIN...WE SHALL MEET AGAIN!

WHURRRRR

WELL THERE GOES CHIEF MC NALLY AND THE BOYS! LOOKS LIKE THE FIRE IS UNDER CONTROL...ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL...

WHAT DO YOU THINK ROBIN... DID YOU HAVE ENOUGH EXCITEMENT FOR ONE DAY?

OOH WOW BATMAN...YOU'RE TOO MUCH, I'M AFRAID ALL THIS EXCITEMENT HAS WORN ME OUT COMPLETELY... I SURE HOPE THEY PUT THE JOKER AWAY FOR GOOD THIS TIME.

ROBIN...KNOWING THE CLEVERNESS OF THIS ARTFUL DODGER, WHO CAN SAY FOR SURE ...PERHAPS A FRONTAL LOBOTOMY WOULD BE THE ANSWER. IF SCIENCE COULD OPERATE ON THIS DISTORTED BRAIN AND PUT IT TO GOOD USE... SOCIETY WOULD REAP A GREAT BENEFIT.... COME ROBIN, INTO THE THE BATMOBILE... AND HOME!

BOOK and RECORD SET

IT'S FUN TO READ AS YOU HEAR!

1.49

45 RPM

PR#30

BAT MAN

BOOK & RECORD

The Action "COMES ALIVE" As You Read!!

POWER RECORDS

ROBIN meets MAN-BAT!

ROBIN MEETS MAN-BAT

IT IS 3 A.M. AT THE GOTHAM FIRST NATIONAL BANK... AND THE CLICKING NOISES YOU HEAR ARE THE TUMBLERS OF A LOCK-- **MAGNIFIED** MANY TIMES BY INTRICATE AMPLIFICATION EQUIPMENT.

K-CHIK K-CHIK CHIK K-CHIK K-CH

THE LOCK BELONGS TO FIRST NATIONAL'S MAXIMUM SECURITY WALK-IN VAULT--BUT TO THREE HIGHLY SPECIALIZED BANK ROBBERS, NO SECURITY SEEMS TO BE MAXIMUM ENOUGH!

HEY, THAT DOES IT. SHE'S READY TO OPEN.

THAT'S A BOY, MITCH. YOU'RE DOING FINE. WE'RE ALMOST HOME.

K-CHIK K-CHIK KLIK

ALL THE OTHER ALARMS HAVE BEEN SHUT OFF. HELP ME PULL THE DOOR.

ALL THAT MONEY... A FEDERAL RESERVE DEPOSIT OF MILLIONS... WAITING FOR US JUST ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THAT DOOR.

GEEZ, MITCH, THIS THING'S TWO FEET THICK.

OKAY, I'M HELPING, I'M HELPING.

ALMOST... JUST A LITTLE MORE...

GOOD EVENING, GENTLEMEN, WE'RE GLAD YOU COULD DROP BY.

BATMAN... AND ROBIN!

DON'T YOU FELLOWS *KNOW* IT'S POLITE TO *KNOCK* FIRST?

THEY WERE WAITING INSIDE!

NO! IT ISN'T FAIR! HOW COULD THEY KNOW--

EVERY CROOK MAKES AT LEAST ONE MISTAKE, TRENCH--- AND YOUR GANG IS NO EXCEPTION!

YOUR MISTAKE WAS FALLING INTO THE PHONEY NEWS ITEM BATMAN PLANTED ABOUT A HUGE FEDERAL RESERVE DEPOSIT IN THIS BRANCH.

WHAT ARE WE RUNNING HERE, A DEBATE? LET'S PLUG'EM!

OOOFFF

THEY'RE ON TOP OF US ALREADY!

WHY, YOU LITTLE- UHHHH!

ROBIN AND I PERFER TO FIGHT *WITHOUT* GUNS AND WE EXPECT THE SAME FROM *YOU!*

UH!

BATMAN, LOOK OUT! THE THIRD CROOK HAS ANOTHER... *GUN??*

NOT A GUN, BOY WONDER, BUT SOMETHING FAR MORE USEFUL!

HMMMMMM

THE BANK ROBBER FLIPS A SWITCH ON THE STRANGE CIRCUT-STUDDED GADGET IN HIS HAND...AND AT ONCE THE AIR IS FILLED WITH A PIERCING EAR-SPLITTING SOUND.

ARHH! MY EARS!

UHH! ME TOO, ROBIN...I CAN'T EVEN THINK STRAIGHT!

THAT'S THE WHOLE IDEA BEHIND OUR *SONIC-DISRUPTOR,* BATMAN. A FEW MORE SECONDS OF THIS AND YOU AND THE PUNK WILL BE ON THE FLOOR IN AGONY.

WHILE *WE* STAND BACK AND ENJOY THE SHOW—THANKS TO THE SPECIAL HIGH-FREQUENCY EAR PLUGS THE THREE OF US ARE WEARING!

OHHH...I'M COVERING MY EARS AS TIGHT AS I CAN... IT DOESN'T HELP...
HOLD ON AS LONG AS YOU CAN, ROBIN! FIGHT IT!
YET, NOT EVEN THE DYNAMIC DUO CAN WITHSTAND THE TERRIBLE ONSLAUGHT OF SOUND FOR LONG, AND AS THEY DROP TO THEIR KNEES...
MMMMMMM
HA! SEEING THIS WAS WORTH GETTIN' BEAT UP FOR!
SCREEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEE
FROM EVERY DIRECTION THE NIGHTMARISH SCREECHING SOUND SEEMS TO SURROUND THEM...UNTIL THE BANK ROBBESS LOOK UP TO SEE A FRIGHTENING FORM CIRCLING ABOVE THEIR HEADS.
...A CREATURE THE SIZE OF A MAN WITH THE UNMISTAKABLE EARS AND LEATHERY WINGS OF A BAT!

SCREEEEEEEEEHMMMMMMMMMM
WHAT IS IT?
IT'S THE MOST HORRIBLE THING I'VE EVER SEEN!
THE SONIC-DISRUPTOR DOESN'T EVEN PHASE IT! I'M GETTING OUT OF HERE!
ME TOO!
WAIT FOR ME!
IN THE FRENZIED CONFUSION, THE SONIC-DISRUPTOR FALLS--AND ITS EAR-SPLITTING DRONE CEASES AT ONCE--AS THE COWLED CRUSADER AND THE BOY WONDER LOOK UP TO SEE...
BATMAN! THAT THING... IT'S GOING AFTER THE BANK ROBBERS!
I KNOW, ROBIN.
HEY! PUT ME DOWN! IT'S GOT ME IN ITS CLAWS!
LOOK OUT! HE'S DROPPING YOU ON TOP OF- URGHHH!
6

DO YOU BELIEVE THIS? IT SLAMMED TO OF THEM TOGETHER... NOW IT'S PULLING THE THIRD CROOK INTO THE AIR...

HELP! HE-

...AND KNOCKING HIM SENSELESS INTO THE SIDE OF THE WALL! WHAT A SHOW!

THE CREATURE'S FLYING AWAY, BATMAN. LET'S GO AFTER IT.

NO, ROBIN. THE LEAST WE CAN DO FOR GRATITUDE IS TO LEAVE ***MAN-BAT*** IN PEACE.

MAN-BAT!? YOU ***KNOW*** THIS GUY-- MONSTER-- WHATEVER HE IS?

YES... AND I KNOW HE MUST BE IN GREAT ***PAIN*** RIGHT NOW... THAT'S WHY HE FLEW OFF.

7

I DON'T UNDERSTAND...

LIKE A TRUE BAT, MAN-BAT'S HEARING IS ULTRA-SENSITIVE TO EVEN THE MINUTEST SOUNDS. IF YOU THINK THAT SONIC DISRUPTOR WAS ROUGH ON *US* I'D HATE TO IMAGINE HOW IT MUST'VE FELT TO *HIM*.

HE MUST BE A VERY BRAVE MAN. UHH... HE IS A *MAN*, ISN'T HE?

ROBIN, I THINK IT'S TIME YOU HEARD THE FULL STORY OF MY FRIEND KIRK LANGSTROM...

...KIRK LANGSTROM, THE EMINENT NOCTURNAL MAMMAL EXPERT, HAD LONG BEEN A FAN OF MINE AND SUPPORTER FOR EVERYTHING THE NAME BATMAN STOOD FOR.

"WELL, IT WAS SEVERAL YEARS AGO THAT HUNDREDS OF HOURS OF HARD WORK FINALLY BROUGHT HIM ON THE VERGE OF AN INCREDIBLE DISCOVERY, IN THE CONFINES OF HIS LAB UNDER THE GOTHAM MUSEUM..."

THAT DOES IT, MY LEATHERY-WINGED FRIEND...I'VE TAKEN THE FINAL DOSE OF MY SERUM... NOW WE WAIT, YOU AND I...

THE 'FRIEND' LANGSTROM SPOKE TO WAS A LIVE BAT... AND THE SERUM WAS A SPECIALLY-PREPARED GLAND-EXTRACT HE HAD DERIVED FROM THE CREATURE... FOR **HUMAN** CONSUMPTION!

HE LATER TOLD ME HE CAME UP WITH THE SERUM AS A GIFT FOR **ME**, BUT BEING THE THOROUGH SCIENTIST HE WAS, TESTED THE SERUM ON HIMSELF FIRST. AT FIRST, THE RESULTS SEEMED IMPRESSIVE...

8

URGHHH... THAT INFERNAL NOISE IS UNBEARABLE!

WHAT IN HEAVEN'S NAME CAN BE CAUSING SO MUCH RACKET?

PLIP

PLIP

PLIP

PLIP

LANGSTROM WAS BOTH STARTLED AND TREMENDOUSLY EXCITED WHEN HE TRACED THE NOICE TO IT'S SOURCE, ASTONISHED TO DISCOVER IT WAS NOTHING MORE THAN...

UHHH! A DRIPPING FAUCET! BUT TO ME IT SOUNDED LIKE SPLASHING TIDAL WAVES! MY HEARING HAS BECOME INCREDIBLY SENSITIVE...

...THE FIRST BAT-CHARACTERISTIC THAT PROVES MY SERUM IS WORKING!

"AND THEN THE **NEXT SIGN** BECAME PAINFULLY APPARENT, WHEN LANGSTROM RUSHED TO HIS DESK TO JOT DOWN SOME NOTES...

AAAARGHHH... MY EYES...I CAN'T STAND THE LIGHT OF THAT DESKLAMP!

I'VE GOT TO PUT ON MY SUNGLASSES ...THEY'RE IN MY JACKET...

ONCE HE FOUND THE DARK LENSES, HE PUT THEM ON AND SWITCHED OFF THE LIGHT... ONLY TO GET A **THIRD** SUPRISE...

I'M NAVIGATING IN UTTER DARKNESS WITHOUT BUMPING INTO A THING!

MY VOCAL CHORDS ARE EMITTING ULTRA-SONIC SIGNALS...

...AND MY SUPER-SENSITIVE HEARING PICKS THEM UP WHEN THEY BOUNCE BACK!

I'VE DONE THE *IMPOSSIBLE!* I NOW POSSESS THE NATURAL RADAR OF A BAT!

SHARK

YES, LANGSTROM HAD ACHIEVED THE IMPOSSIBLE ALL RIGHT... FAR MORE SO THAN EVEN HIS WILDEST IMAGININGS!

BECAUSE, WHEN HE HAPPENED TO LOOK DOWN AT HIS HANDS...

OMIGOD! MY ***HANDS***-- THEY'RE GROWING HAIRY... WITH CLAWS... LIKE A BAT! I... I DON'T UNDERSTAND. CAN THIS BE A SIDE EFFECT OF THE GLAND EXTRACT? I'LL PUT ON SOME GLOVES.

IT'S ONLY *TEMPORARY*... *HAS* TO BE!

"BUT WHILE PREPARING TO GO OUT HE ENCOUNTERED STILL ANOTHER OMINOUS SIGN...

MY ***HAT!*** W-WHAT PUSHED IT OFF MY HEAD?

"BY NOW LANGSTROM ALREADY KNEW THE WORST--BUT HE HAD TO RUN TO A MIRROR TO SEE THE HORRIBLE GHASTLY TRUTH FOR HIMSELF.

URGHHH! I HAVE GIANT EARS... RED EYES...

FUR INSTEAD OF SKIN!

THIS CAN'T BE HAPPENING..

...BUT IT IS! I'VE BECOME A...

MAN = BAT

ONCE THE INITIAL SHOCK OF HIS NIGHTMARISH FATE HAD WORN OFF, LANGSTROM REMAINED AT HIS MUSEUM LAB, LATE INTO THE NIGHT, TRYING TO DISCOVER WHERE HIS SERUM HAD GONE WRONG...

UNTIL HIS WORK WAS INTERRUPTED BY A RUCKUS IN THE JEWELRY EXHIBIT UPSTAIRS IN THE MUSEUM. IT WAS THE "BLACK-OUT GANG" AT WORK--A GROUP THAT WORE SPECIAL EQUIPMENT TO ENABLE THEM TO OPERATE IN THE DARK!

BUT THAT NIGHT, THEY WERE ENCOUNTERING OPPOSITION--

--NAMELY, ME!

IT'S BATMAN!

WE'VE GOT THE ADVANTAGE--WE CAN SEE HIM, BUT HE CAN'T SEE US--

JUMP HIM!

I WAS BADLY OUTNUMBERED... BUT WITH THAT MANY RATS ON MY BACK, ANYWHERE I PUNCHED MY FIST CONNECTED!

I WAS HOLDING MY OWN WELL ENOUGH, WHEN ALL OF A SUDDEN...

SCREEE

SCREEEEE

HUH? WHAT THE *BLAZES* IS *THAT?*

I SEE IT TOO -- BUT I WISH I DIDN'T!

PHWHAM

OOOOF! THIS FREAK IS EVEN WORSE THAN BATMAN!

YES, ROBIN, THAT NIGHT I HAD A NEW ALLY ... AS BATMAN AND MAN-BAT FOUGHT SIDE-BY-SIDE TO MOP UP THE REST OF THE GANG...

SKREEK... YOU ALL RIGHT, BATMAN?

SURE, FRIEND, THANKS TO YOU!

THERE'S SO MUCH I NEED TO KNOW ABOUT YOU.

NO! IT'S ALL GONE WRONG ...I WANT NO PART OF YOU ...OR ANYONE ELSE...

DON'T GO! COME BACK! LET ME TRY TO HELP YOU ...

HE FLEW OFF INTO THE NIGHT... AND IT WASN'T UNTIL *MONTHS LATER* THAT I LEARNED HE WAS REALLY *KIRK LANGSTROM*...

...AND THAT HIS ONCE-NOBLE *MIND* HAD BECOME *DANGEROUSLY* ***UNSTABLE*** AS A RESULT OF THE SERUM.

WHEW! THAT'S SOME STORY, BATMAN! DID IT EVER HAVE A HAPPY ENDING?

FINALLY... AFTER SEVERAL MONTHS... I WAS ABLE TO CATCH UP WITH HIM AND ADMINISTER THE CHEMICAL ANTIDOTE THAT TURNED *LANGSTROM* BACK TO HIS *HUMAN FORM*.

EVERYONE HAD HIGH HOPES FOR HIS RECOVERY, ESPECIALLY WHEN *LANGSTROM* DECIDED TO MARRY HIS FIANCE *FRANCINE* SOON AFTER THAT.

AND THEN WHAT HAPPENED?

THEY MARRIED... BUT BY THAT TIME, LANGSTROM HAD RELAPSED INTO *MAN-BAT* AGAIN... AND HE PERSUADED POOR FRANCINE TO TAKE THE *GLAND-EXTRACT*...

...SO THAT ***SHE TOO*** BECAME A BAT. IT WAS HIS WAY OF GETTING HER TO PROVE HER LOVE FOR HIM.

MAN, THOSE TWO HAVE BEEN THROUGH A LOT!

AND I THOUGHT THE WORST WAS BEHIND THEM... UNTIL TONITE! POOR LANGSTROM MUST'VE SUFFERED ANOTHER--

SCREECH! YOU TOOK MY MAN-BAT AWAY SCREECH! AND FOR THAT YOU MUST DIE!

LOOK OUT! LANGSTROM'S BACK--BUT HE'S NOT MAKING ANY SENSE!

WAIT A MINUTE, ROBIN, I THINK I UNDERSTAND!

THIS ISN'T LANGSTROMMM...

GOOD GRIEF! THE THING HAS SWOOPED UP BATMAN!

THE FEARSOME CREATURE OF THE NIGHT AND THE CAPED CRIME-FIGHTER LOCK THEMSELVES IN FURIOUS AND FRENZIED COMBAT OVER ROBIN'S HEAD...

I'VE GOT TO DO SOMETHING!

I KNOW--MY UTILITY BELT!

QUICKLY, THE TEEN WONDER EXTRACTS A CERTAIN CAPSULE AND HURLS IT UPWARD INTO THE FRAY...

...WHERE IT BREAKS OPEN IN THE FACE OF BATMAN'S MONSTROUS OPPONENT...

GOOD THINKING, ROBIN! THAT SNEEZING POWDER OUGHT TO GIVE ME THE ADVANTAGE I NEED!

AACHOO A-CHOO

BUT JUST AS BATMAN WRENCHES HIMSELF LOOSE FROM THE SUFFERING CREATURE... ...STILL ANOTHER INHUMAN SOUND TEARS THROUGH THE AIR...

SCREEE SCREEE SCREEE SCREE

AND AS BATMAN AGILY LANDS ON THE FLOOR...

OM'GOSH! NOW THERE ARE TWO OF THEM! THE MAN-BATS ARE FIGHTING!

NO, THEY'RE NOT! THE SECOND ONE IS TRYING TO CALM DOWN THE FIRST!

AND HE NEEDS HELP!

THE MASKED MANHUNTER EXTRACTS A BAT-ROPE AND A BATARANG FROM HIS UTILITY BELT --AND WITH SKILLS AND REFLEXES HONED TO ABSOLUTE PERFECTION, HE FLINGS THE BATARANG UPWARD...

WHOOOOSH

RIGHT ON, BATMAN! YOUR BAT-LINE IS WRAPPING ITSELF AROUND BOTH OF THEM, BINDING THEM TOGETHER!

NOW THEY CAN'T USE THEIR WINGS...

AND, WITHOUT THEIR WINGS...

THUD!

MAN-BATS DON'T FLY!

BUT WHEN THE DYNAMIC DUO RUNS UP TO THE GROUNDED INHUMAN PAIR...

LOOK, BATMAN! THE BIGGER ONE'S GOT SOMETHING IN HIS HAND ...THEY'RE TWO HYPODERMIC NEEDLES!

NOW I KNOW WHAT TO DO.

AND BATMAN DOES IT --WASTING NO TIME, AND INJECTING EACH CREATURE WITH ONE OF THE HYPODERMICS

OHH... THEY'RE CHANGING... LOSING THEIR WINGS... BECOMING HUMAN AGAIN... BECOMING... A MAN AND A WOMAN...

ROBIN, I'D LIKE YOU TO MEET KIRK LANGSTROM AND HIS WIFE FRANCINE.

OH KIRK... I'M SO SORRY--I LOST CONTROL OF MYSELF... TO THINK I WOULD TRY AND KILL BATMAN...

IT'S OKAY, HONEY, IT WAS THE *SERUM* WARPING YOUR MIND... YOU DIDN'T KNOW...

WHAT HAPPENED, KIRK?

IT'S ALL A *MISUNDERSTANDING*, BATMAN. I WAS LONG OVERDUE FROM AN *EXPEDITION* IN SOUTH AMERICA...

...AND POOR FRANCINE WAS WORRYING ABOUT ME *HERE* AT HOME...

YESTERDAY... I WAS RUMMAGING THROUGH KIRK'S LAB, VERY DEPRESSED...

...AND I WAS SO *DESPONDENT*, I MISTOOK THE *BAT-EXTRACT* SERUM FOR MY OWN DRINK! THE NEXT THING I KNEW... I WAS A *BAT!*

ONCE THE SERUM AFFECTED HER *MIND*, FRANCINE *BECAME WILDLY INSANE*... AND WHEN I FOUND FRANTIC *SCRAWLS*--

BATMAN YOU KILLED MY MATE! I KILL BATMAN!!

...BLAMING *YOU*, BATMAN, FOR MY *DISAPPEARANCE*...

...I GET IT-- SO YOU TOOK A *DOSE* OF THE SERUM *YOURSELF*, FIGURING THE *ONLY* WAY TO STOP A *MAN-BAT* IS WITH *ANOTHER MAN-BAT!*

THAT'S RIGHT... BUT WHEN I FINALLY LOCATED YOU TWO A FEW HOURS AGO, YOU WERE UP AGAINST THAT -- TERRIBLE SONIC-DISRUPTOR...

...SO I GAVE YOU A HELPING HAND WITH THOSE BANK ROBBERS.

I'LL SAY YOU DID! THAT MUST'VE BEEN MURDER ON YOUR BAT-EARS!

AND WHILE KIRK TOOK SOME TIME TO RECOVER, FRANCINE CAUGHT UP WITH US AND ATTACKED!

BATMAN... CAN YOU EVER FORGIVE ME?

I ALREADY HAVE, FRANCINE!

WELL, I MAY NEVER FORGIVE YOU, BATMAN...

UNLESS YOU GET AROUND TO INTRODUCING ME TO YOUR FRIENDS!

UHHH... SORRY, ROBIN.

KIRK... FRANCINE... I'D LIKE YOU TO MEET MY PROTEGE AND JUNIOR PARTNER...

ROBIN

END

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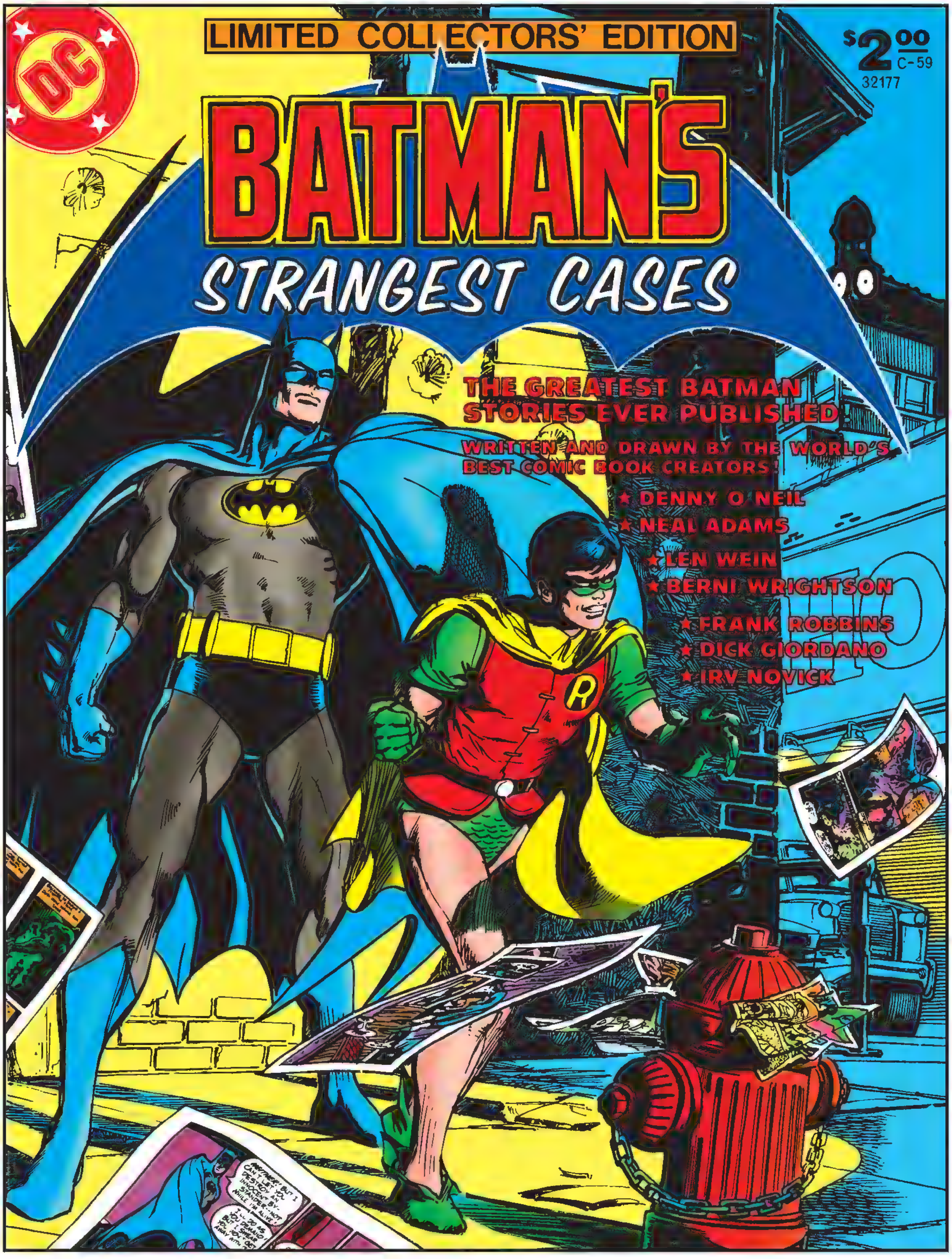
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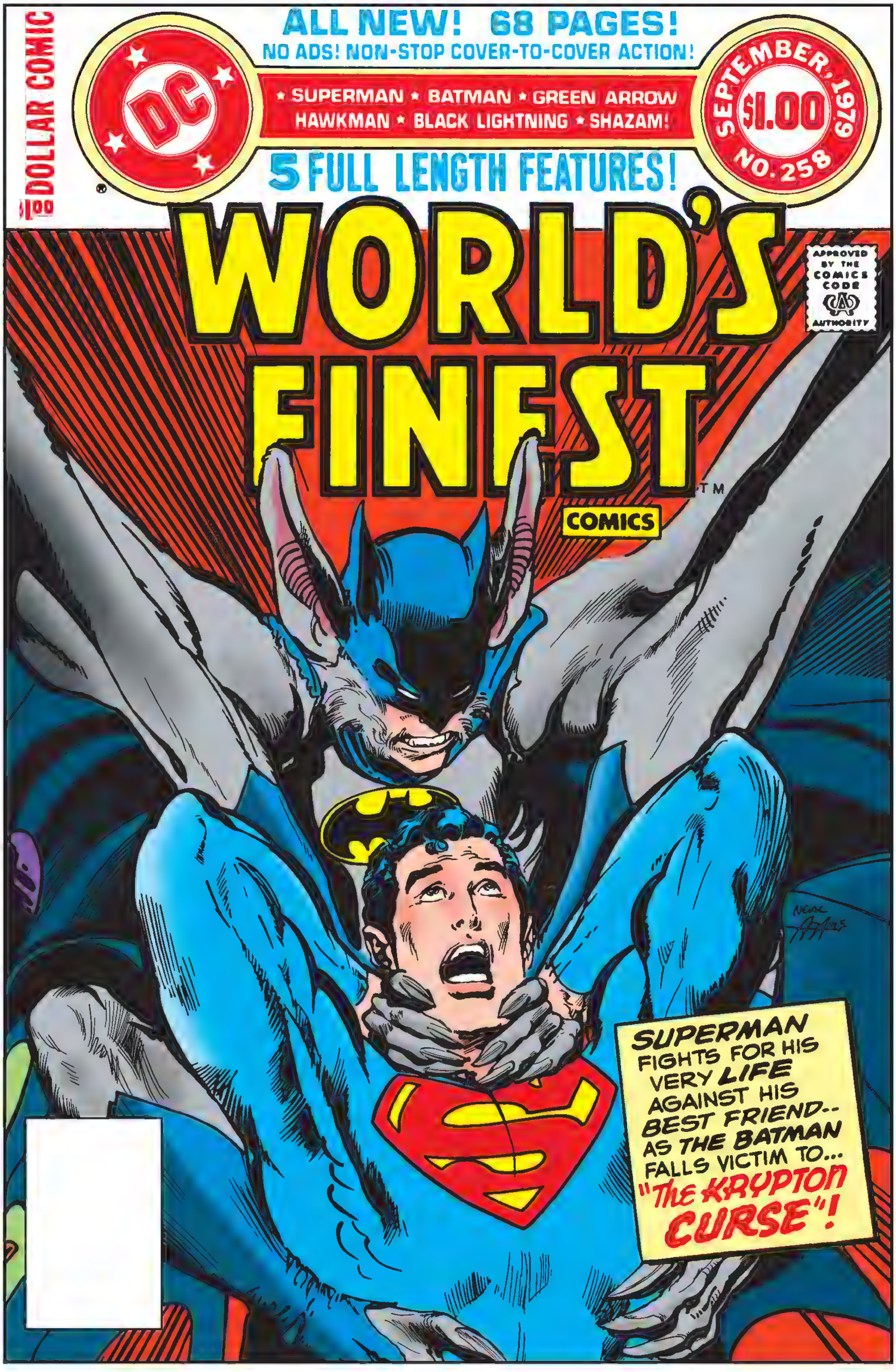
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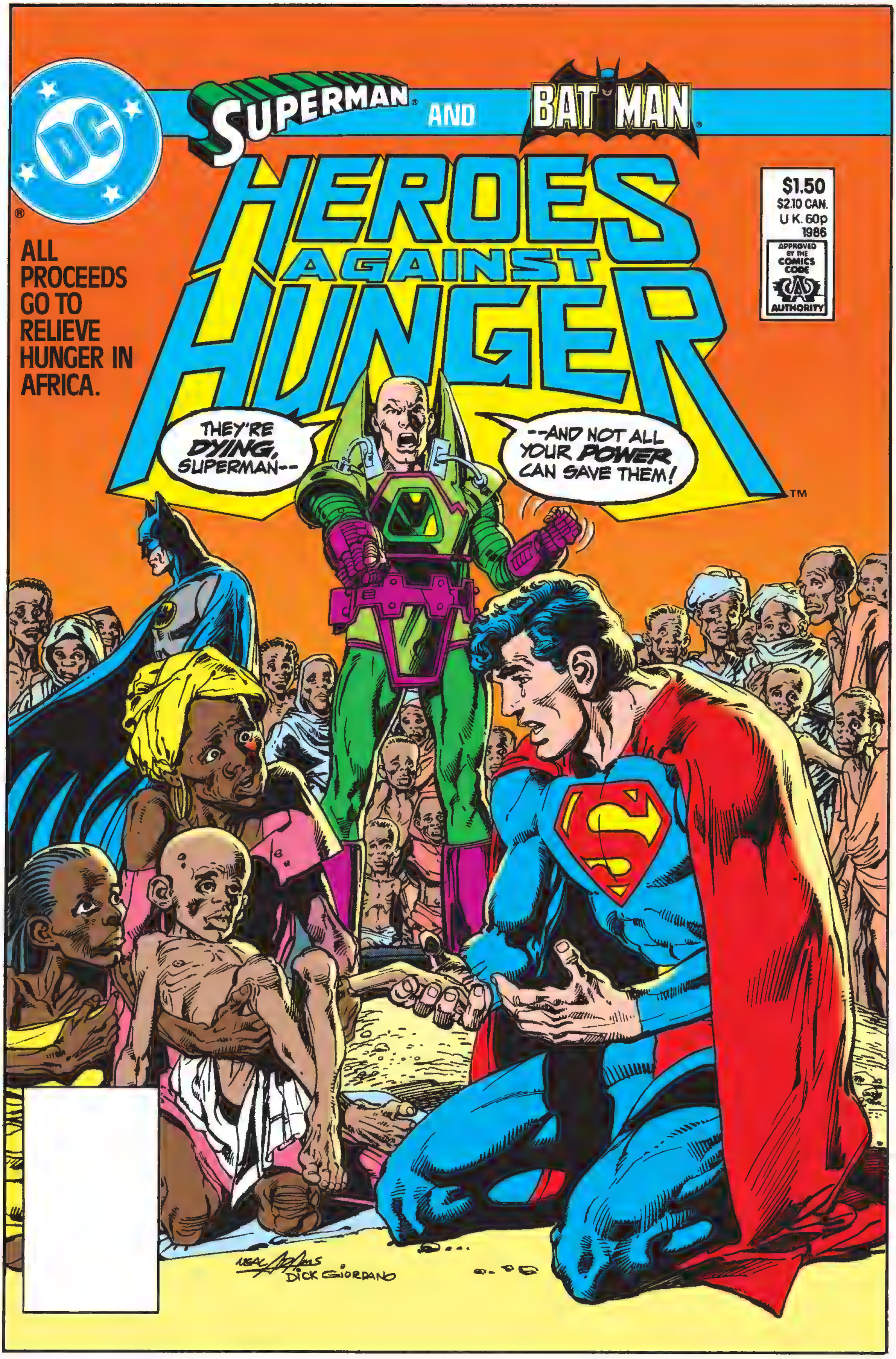
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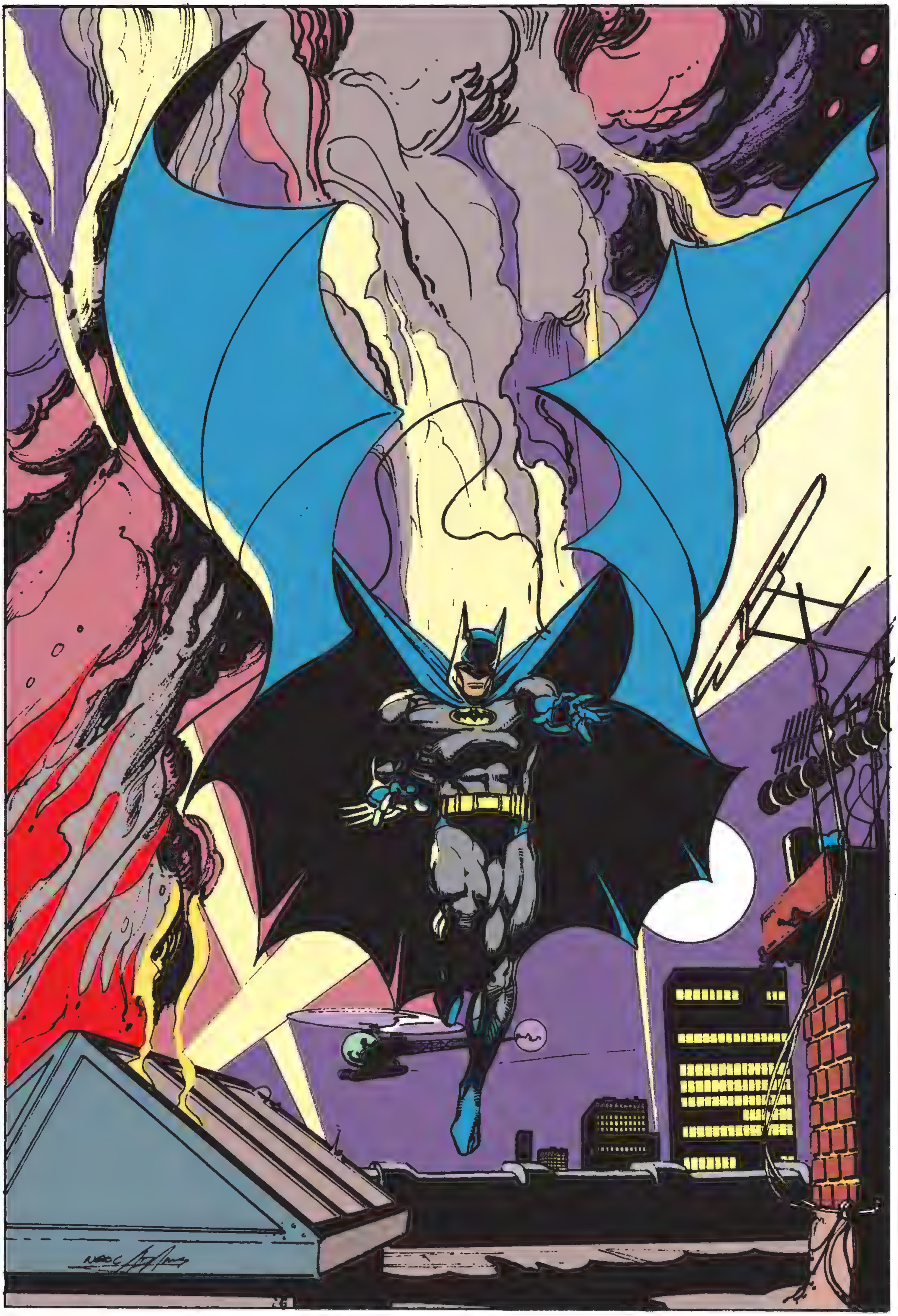

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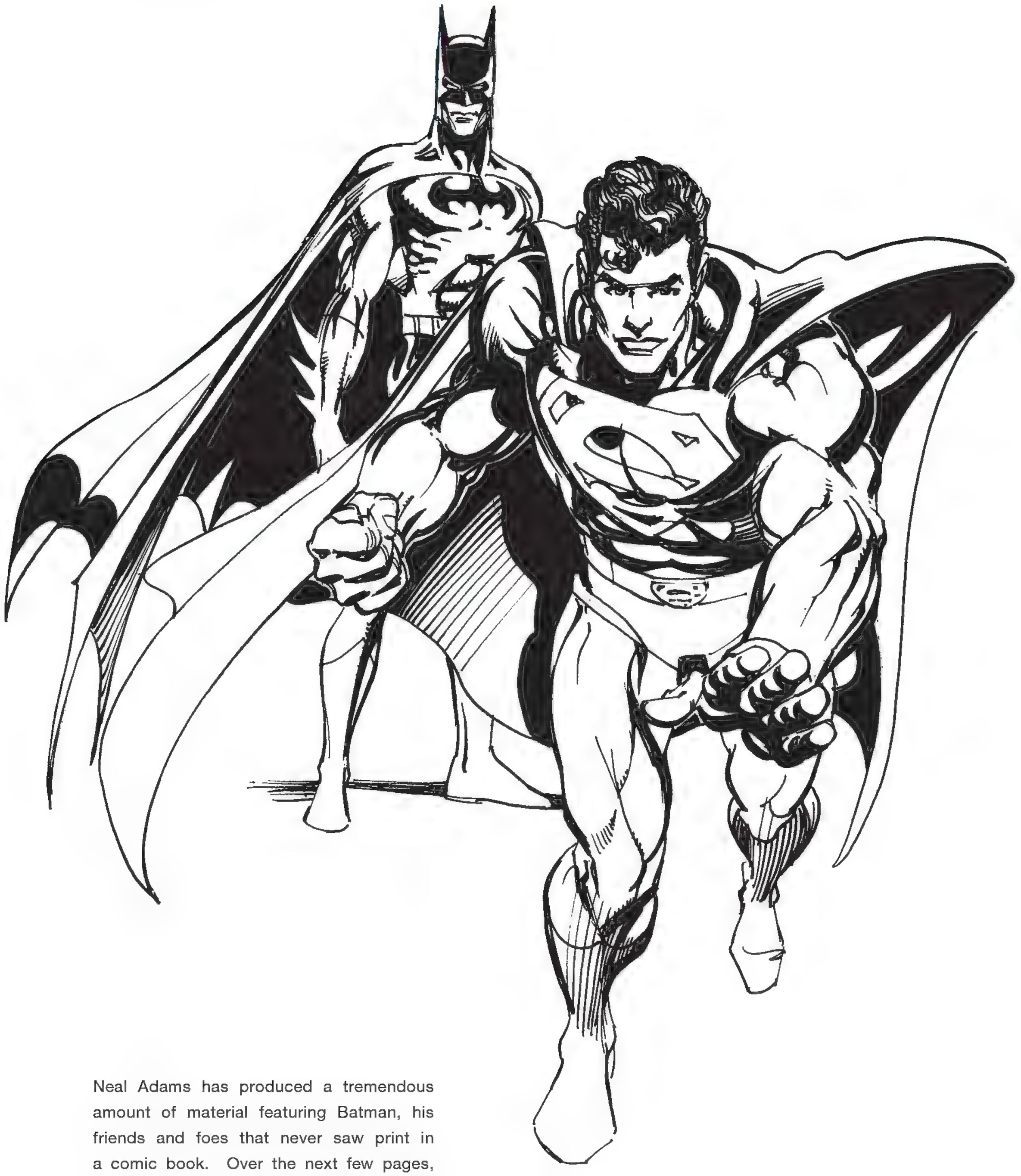
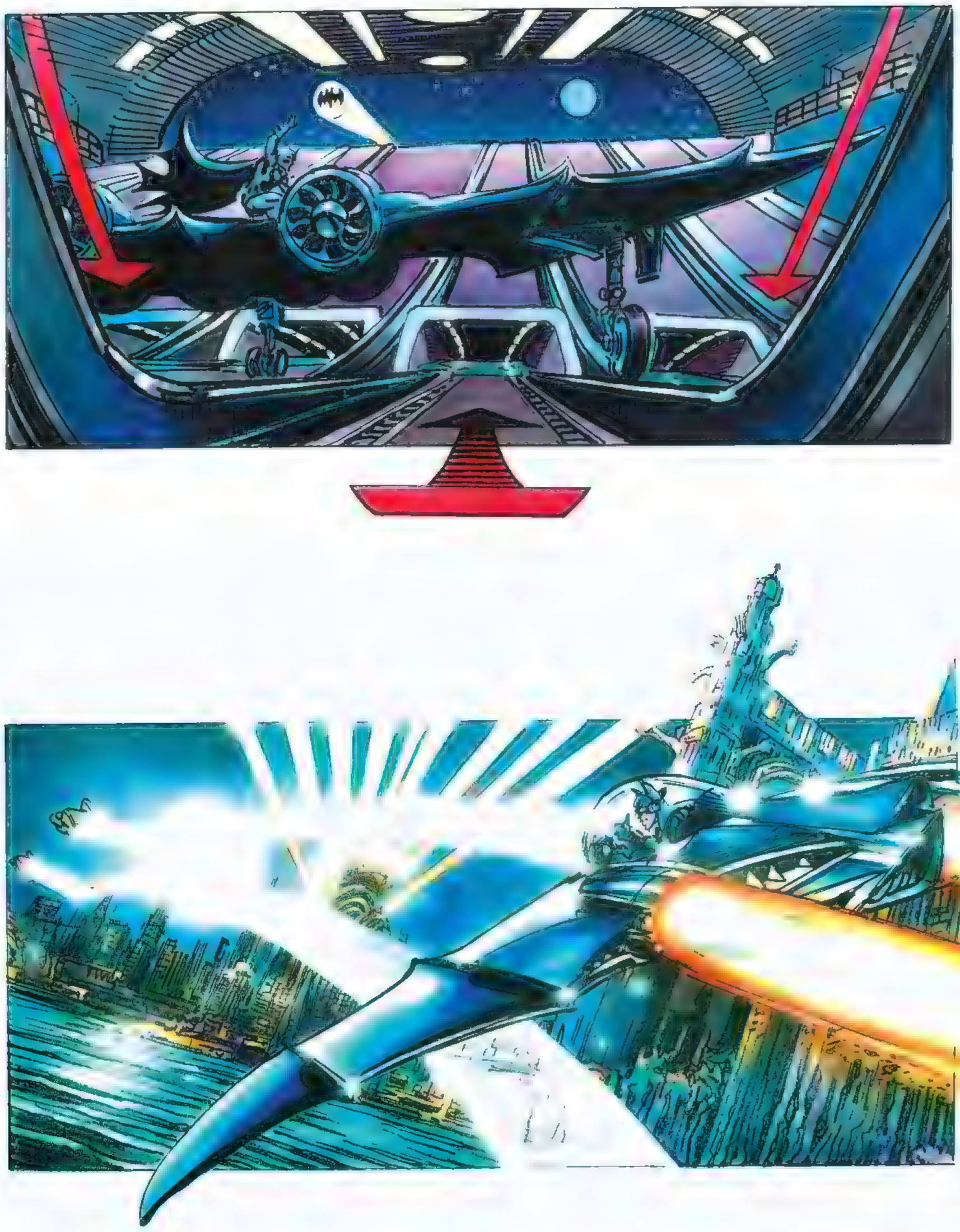
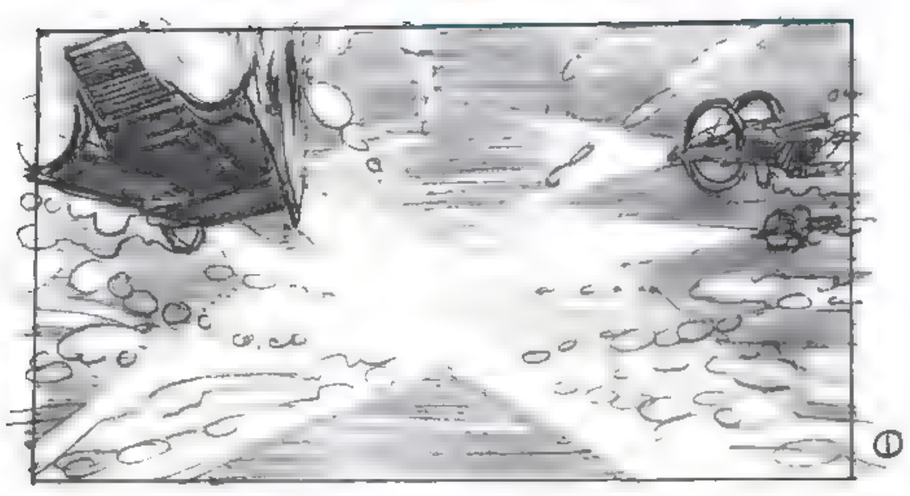


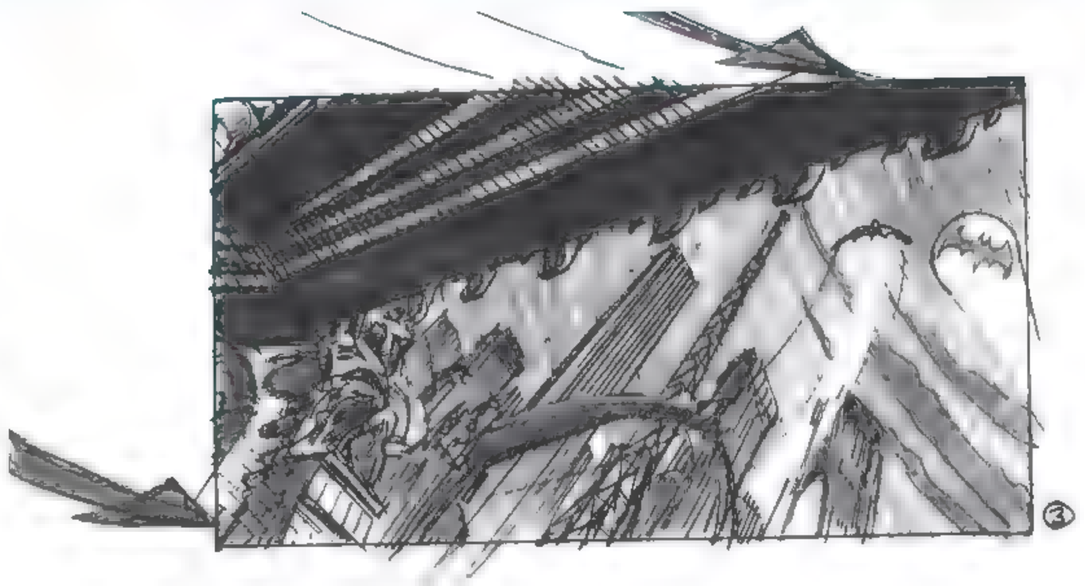
Neal Adams has produced a tremendous amount of material featuring Batman, his friends and foes that never saw print in a comic book. Over the next few pages, you will glimpse some works in progress, some commercial work and gain a better understanding of his evolving style and universal appeal.

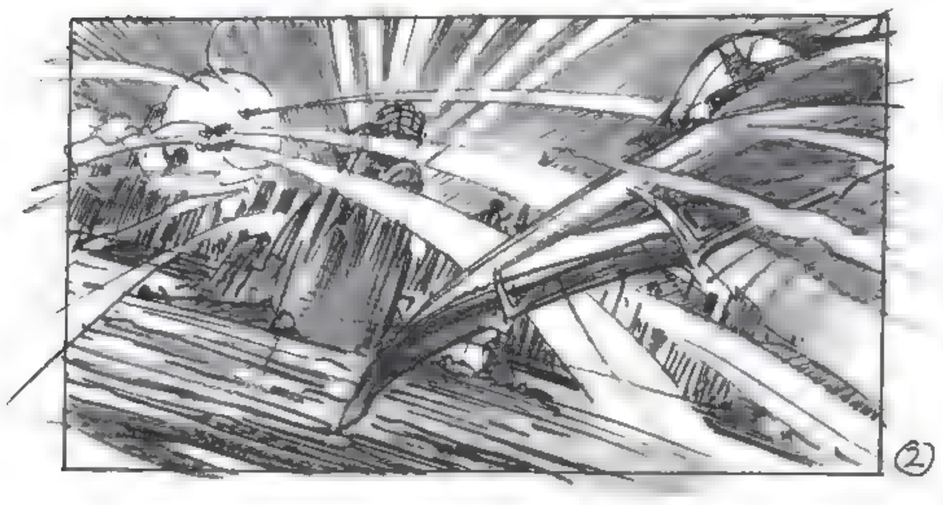
In the 1980s, Neal did a handful of cover sketches, complete with color roughs, for editors. Some were purchased and used; others, such as this piece, were not for reasons lost to time.

Blending Neal's commercial experience with comic book knowhow, these storyboards and presentation pieces were produced for a planned (and never completed) 3-D Batman amusement park ride.

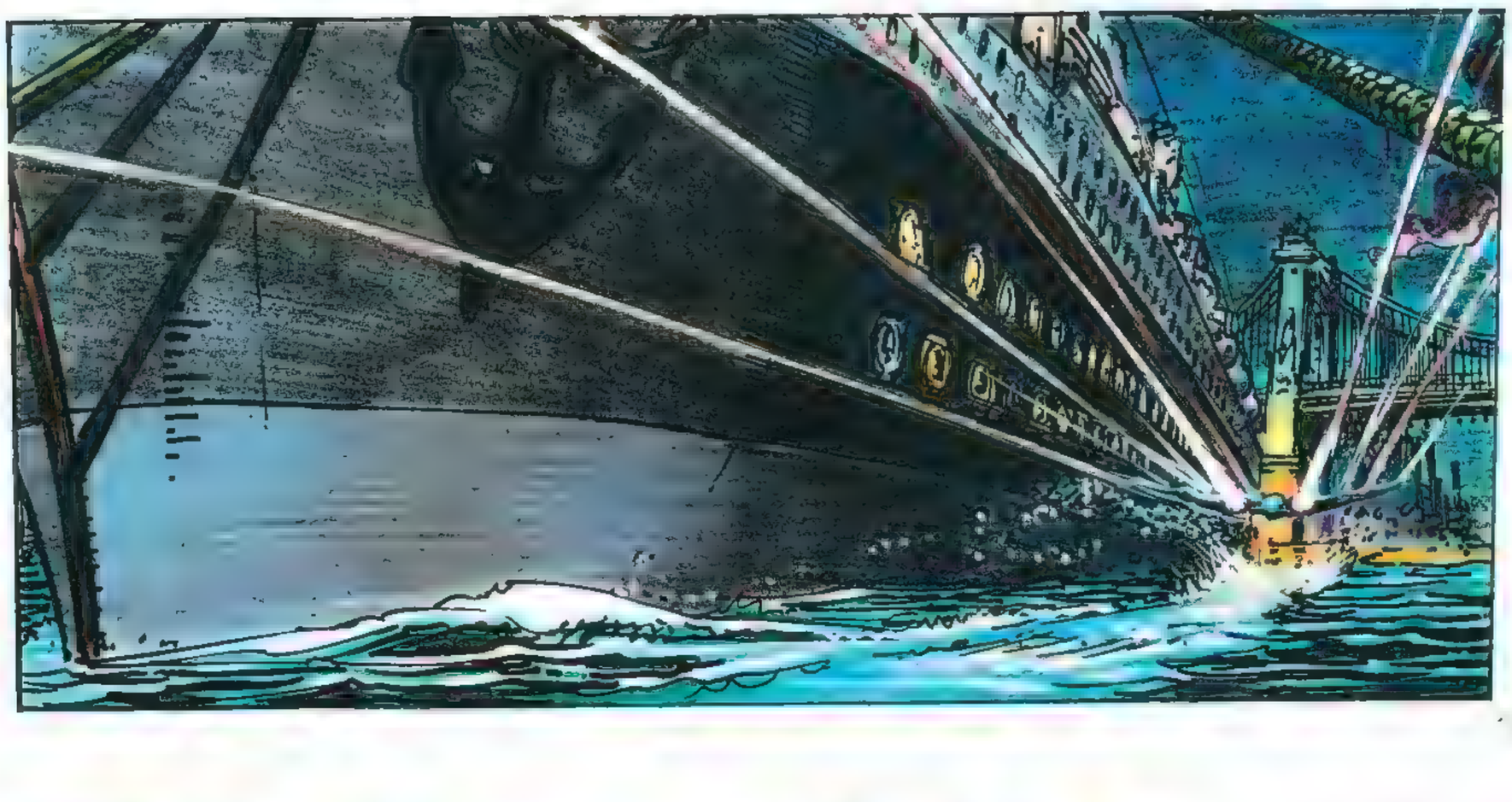




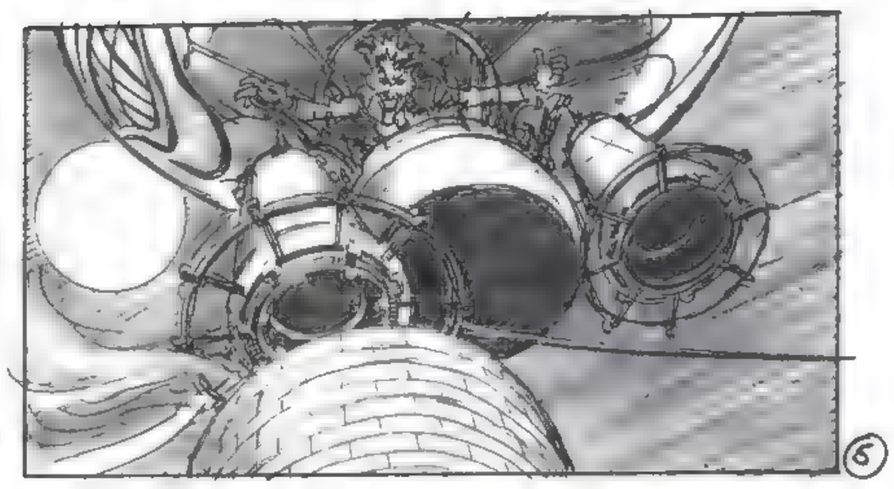


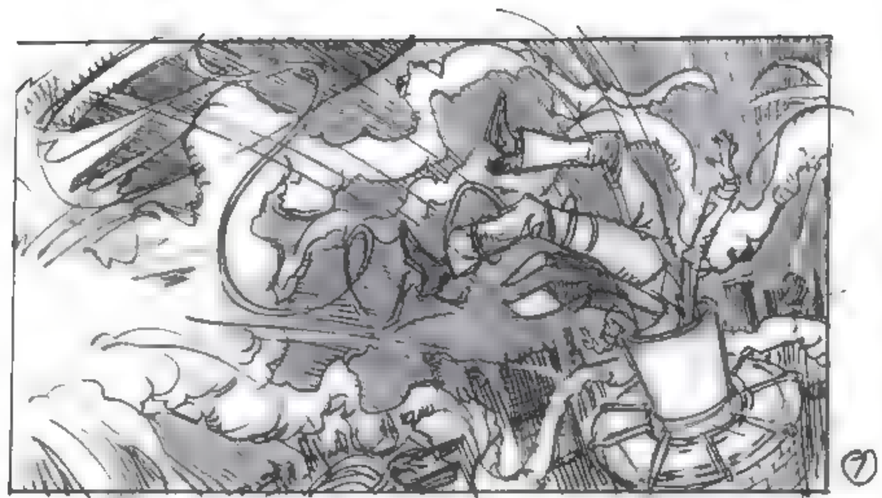


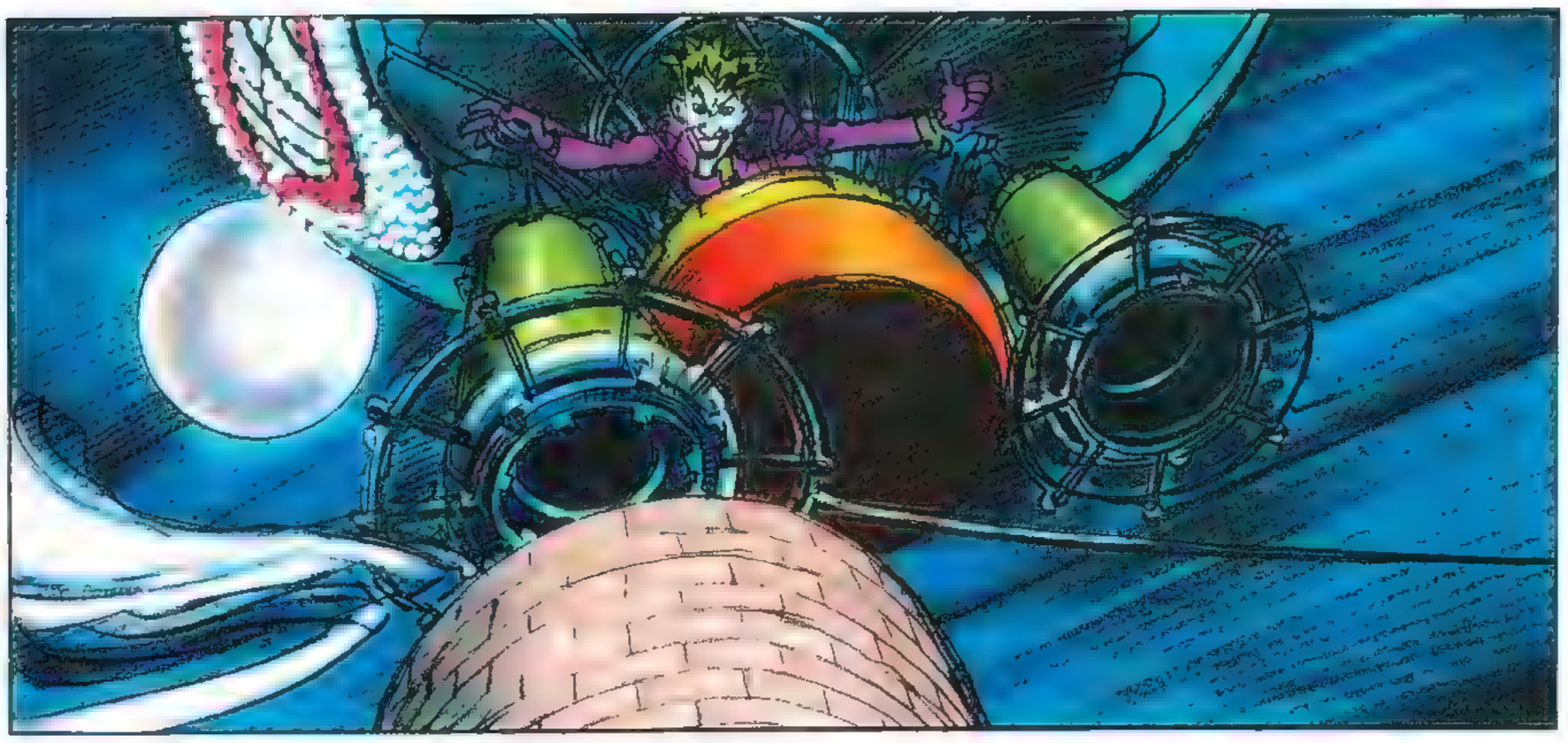
3.D BATMAN RIDE-BEING BUILT.



It's interesting to look at Neal's work with the gothic look established by Anton Furst's designs from the movie series. Also, look carefully to spot Catwoman prowling the rooftops.







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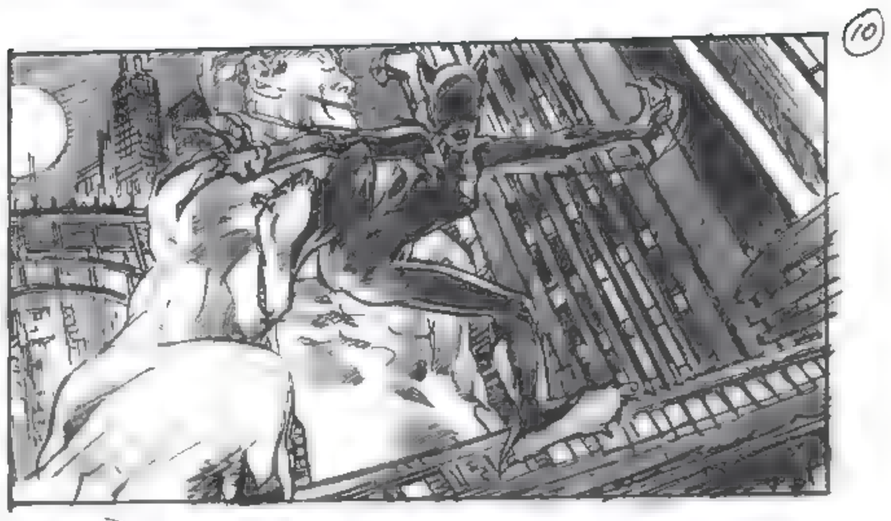
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GOTHAM TREASURY
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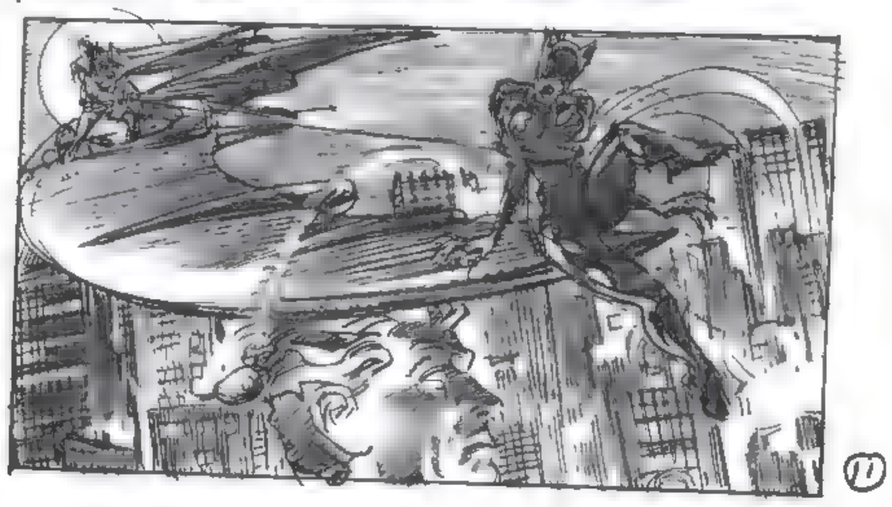
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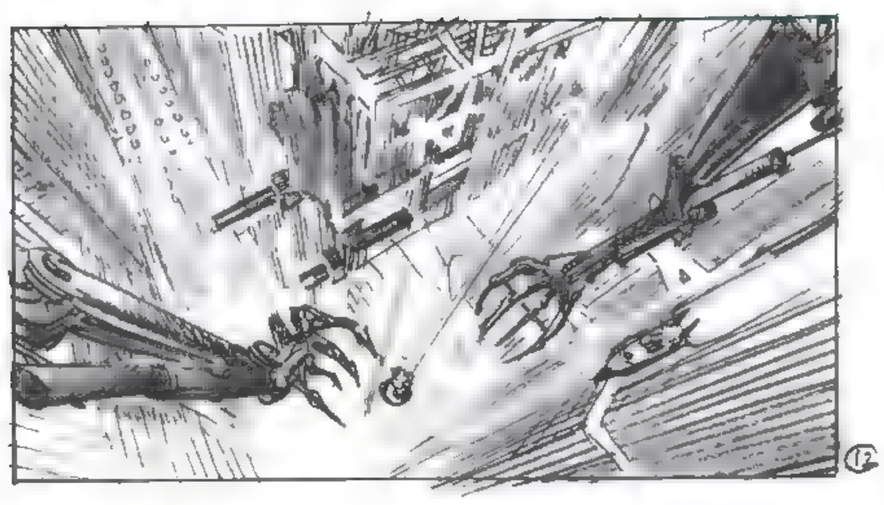
DARK POWER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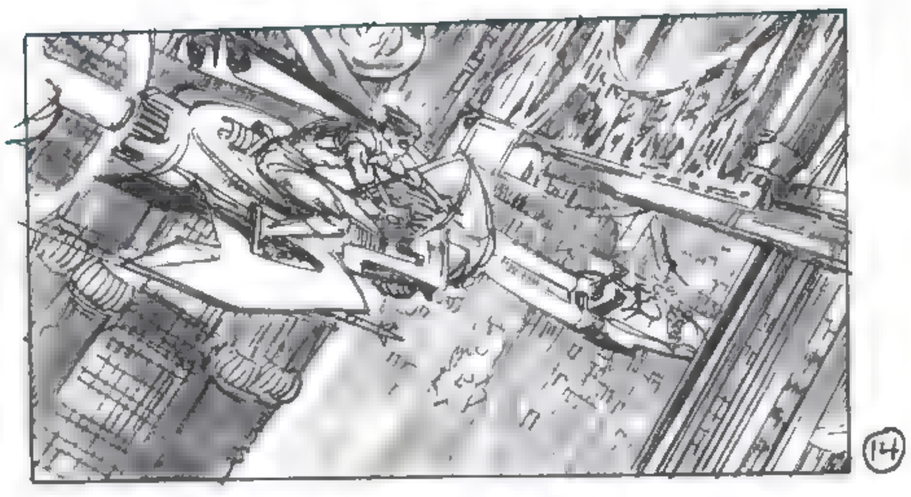
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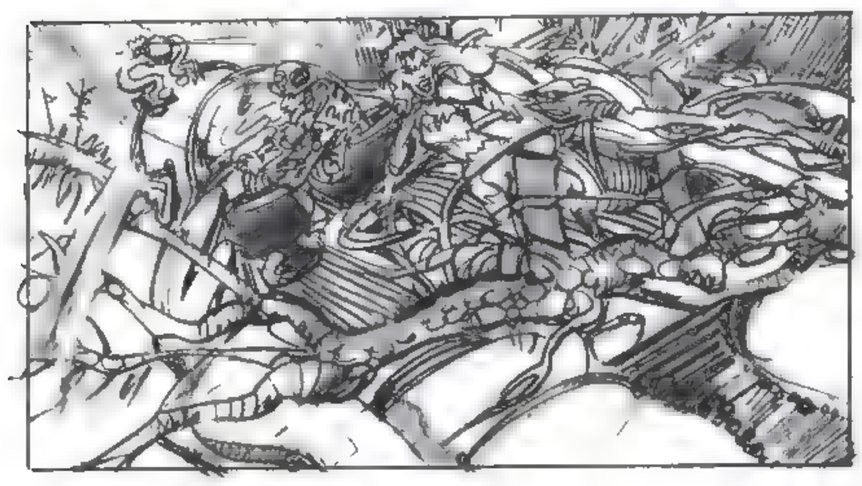
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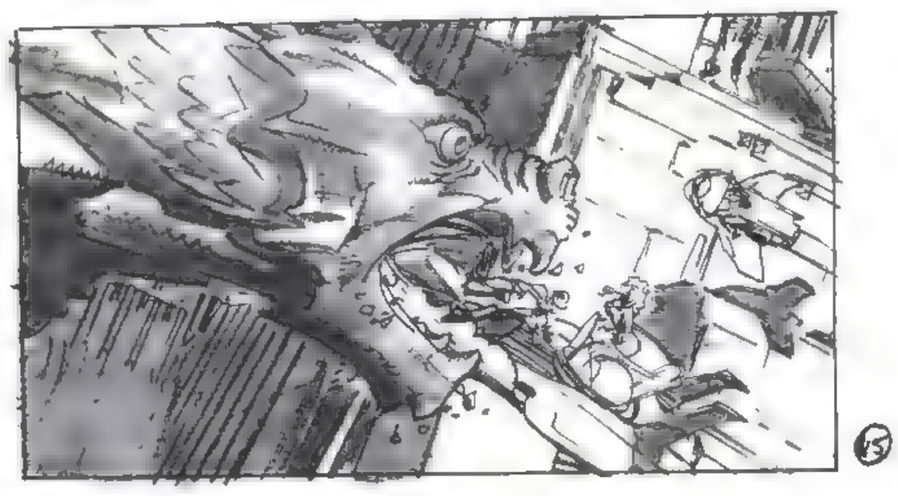
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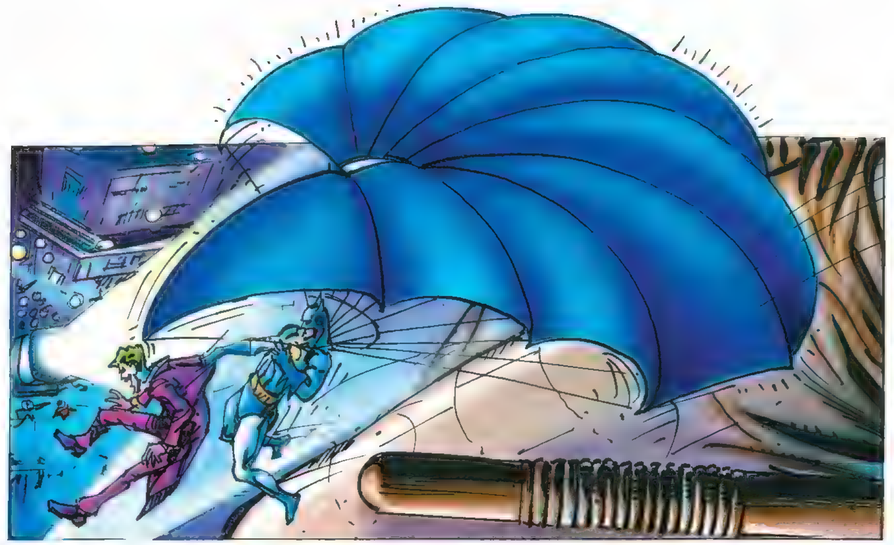

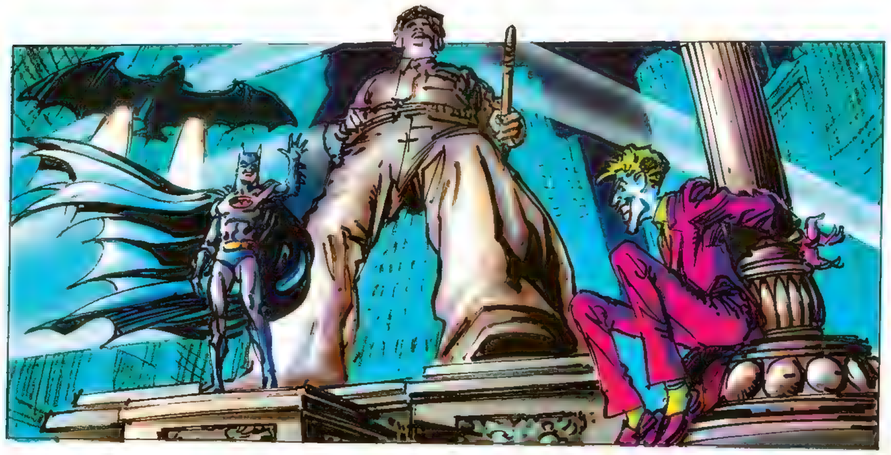

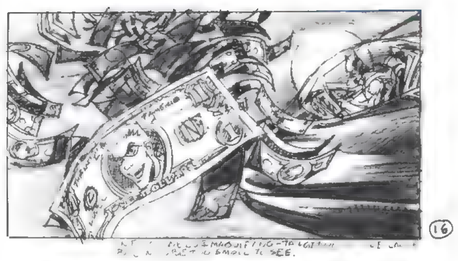
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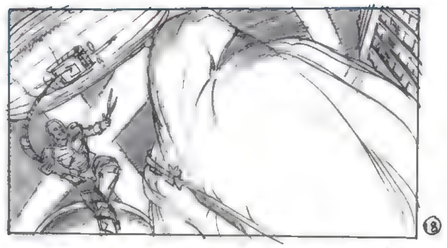
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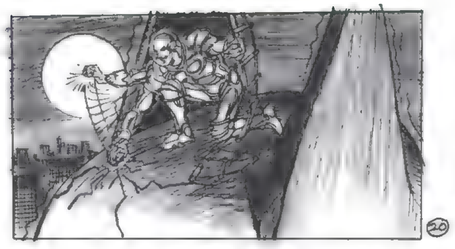
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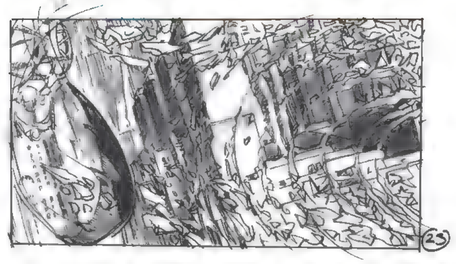
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TREASURY BUILDING
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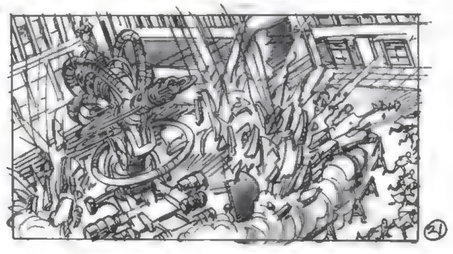
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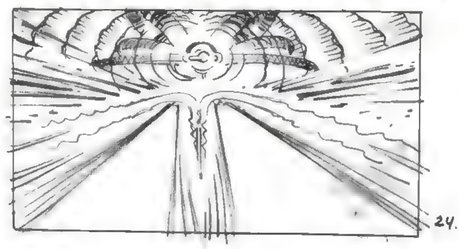
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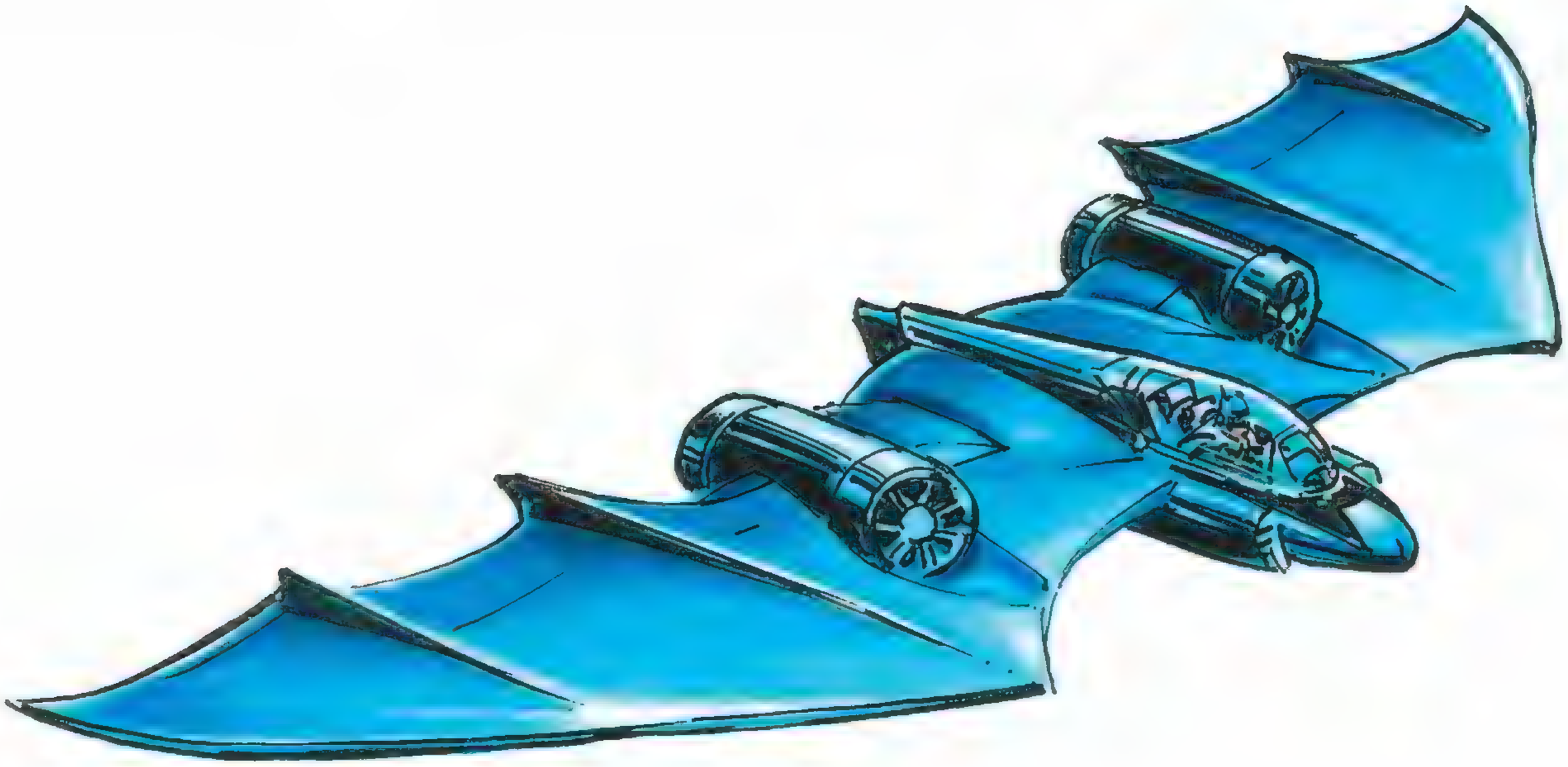
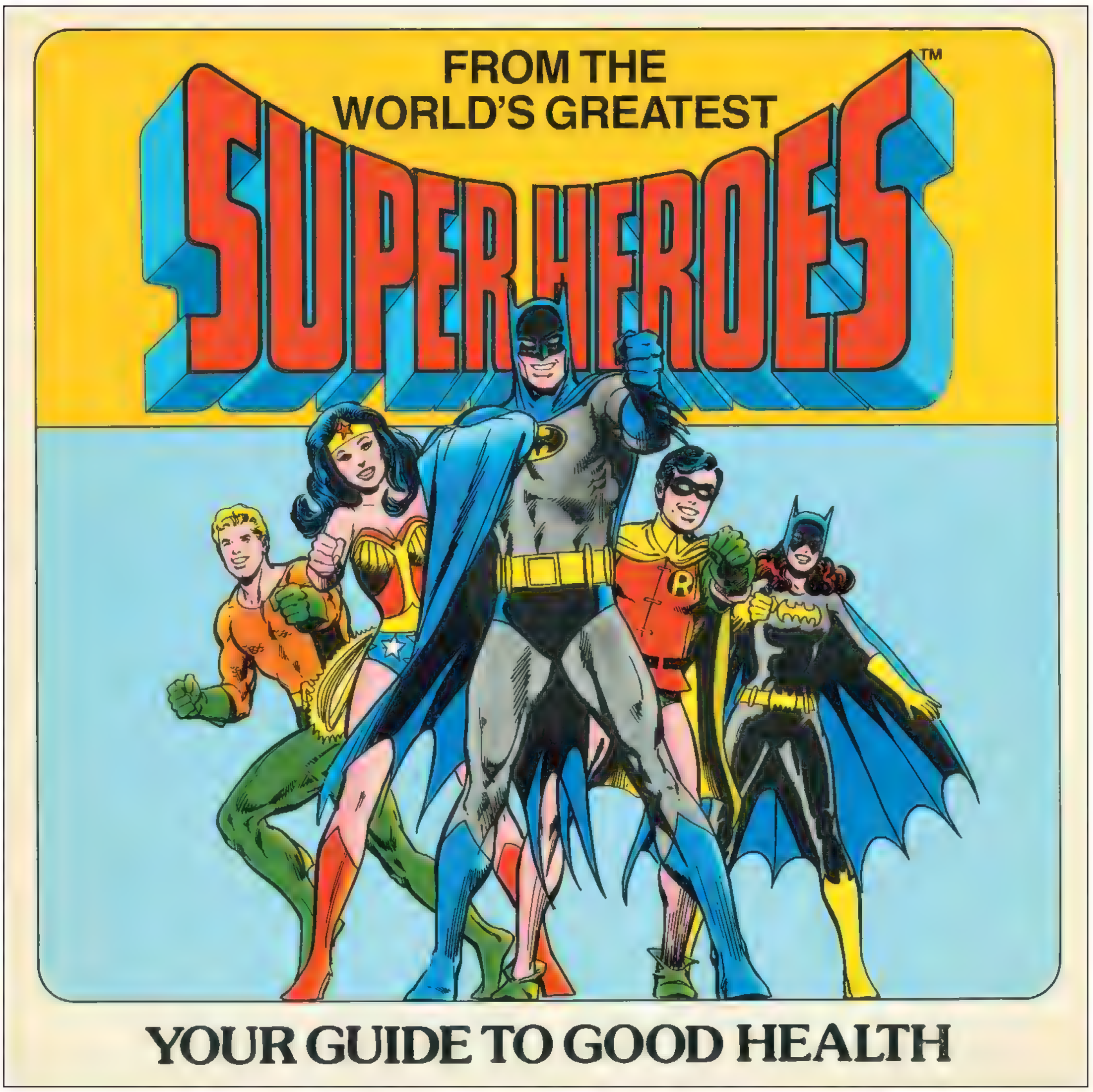
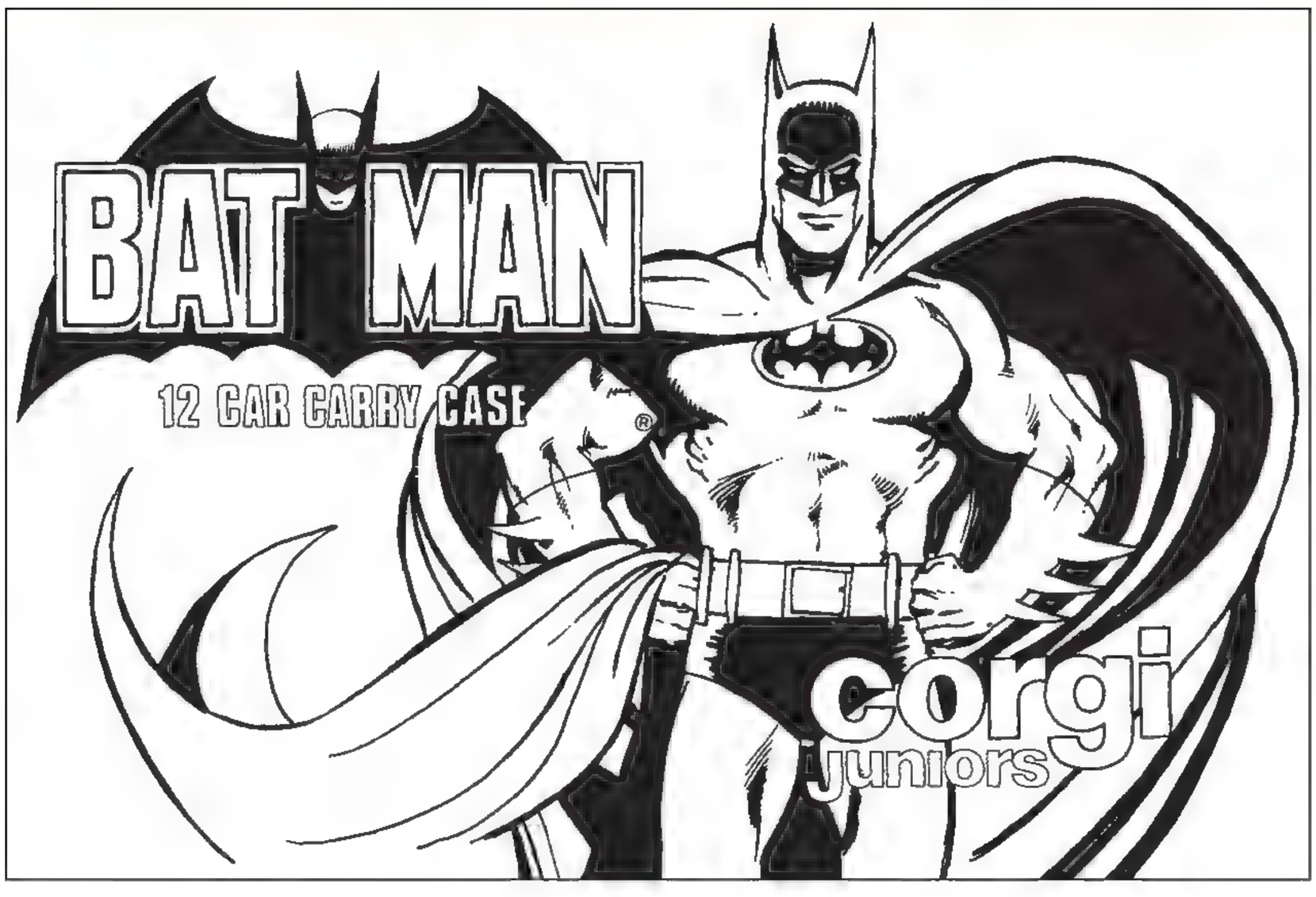


Above: A proposed Batwing for the amusement park ride.

Below: A 1970s illustration used in several places, inked by Dick Giordano and produced by their Continuity Studios.

A Batman sketch Neal produced in recent years.





These illustrations are two more examples of the commercial art Neal produced for DC in the 1970s.

BIOGRAPHIES

NEAL ADAMS

Born on June 15, 1941 in New York City, Neal Adams began his comics career drawing pages for *The Archie Comics Joke Book* immediately after graduating from high school (and being turned down for work by DC Comics). Within a year, he was also drawing commercial illustration spots as well as background work and full pencil work on Howard Nostrand's *Bat Masterson* syndicated comic strip. Building on this early success, he landed a desk at Johnstone and Cushing, the country's leading "comics for advertising" studio. There Adams did comics for such advertisers as Norelco, Bell Telephone, General Electric, AT&T, Tandy Industries, and the United States National Guard.

At the age of 20, Adams began drawing the internationally syndicated comic strip based on the popular TV series *Ben Casey*, while at the same time "ghosting" other newspaper strips like Stan Drake's *The Heart of Juliet Jones, Peter Scratch, Rip Kirby,* and *Secret Agent X-9*. *Ben Casey* was a success, appearing in 161 newspapers worldwide, but after nearly four years on the strip Adams decided to change the direction of his career to illustration and spent six months carefully assembling a new portfolio of his work. When the portfolio disappeared from the first agency he left it with, he was forced to seek work in the comic-book field once again. After doing work for Jim Warren's horror publications, Adams tried DC once more — this time successfully.

Adams joined DC Comics in 1965 and became an overnight sensation by infusing a new visual vitality into longtime characters. Working closely with editorial director Carmine Infantino, Adams quickly became DC's preeminent cover artist, contributing radical and dynamic illustrations to nearly every title the company published. His first interior work was done for Bob Kanigher's war titles, followed by Elongated Man stories for Julie Schwartz, and, curiously enough, Jerry Lewis and Bob Hope comics. Next to come were four issues of THE SPECTRE, three of which Adams also wrote, and three issues of WORLD'S FINEST COMICS for Mort Weisinger. Adams then picked up a new title from Infantino called DEADMAN, a title with which he would soon become closely identified. (Besides the three SPECTRE issues and most of DEADMAN, Adams's writing credits include a number of commercial comic books for Johnstone and Cushing, about a quarter of the writing on *Ben Casey*, and some short stories for both DC and Marvel.)

In the early 1970s Adams did pivotal runs on *The Avengers* and *The Uncanny X-Men* at Marvel Comics. But it was his DC work with writer Dennis O'Neil and inker Dick Giordano during this period that cemented Adams's reputation as a comics legend. The stories featuring Batman, Green Lantern, and Green Arrow broke new ground for mainstream comics and attracted major (and overwhelmingly positive) national media attention to the form.

Later in the 1970s, Adams and Giordano opened Continuity Associates, using their comic art experience to produce advertising artwork for clients around the world. Continuity became a training ground for new talent, mentored and encouraged by the three founders. During this time Adams also designed a three-part science-fiction epic adventure play, *Warp*, which was first staged in Chicago and then moved to Broadway. He earned a Drama Desk Award for his efforts, the only such award earned by a comic-book artist. In addition, Adams has been an outspoken supporter of creator's rights in the comics industry and was influential in convincing comic-book publishers to return original artwork to the artists who created it.

DICK GIORDANO

Dick Giordano was part of a creative team that helped change the face of comic books in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Along with writer Dennis O'Neil and penciller Neal Adams, Giordano helped bring Batman back to his roots as a dark, brooding "creature of the night" and brought relevance to comics in the pages of GREEN LANTERN. Giordano began his career as an artist for Charlton Comics in 1952 and became the company's editor-in-chief in 1965. In that capacity, he revamped the Charlton line by adding an emphasis on such heroes as the Question, Captain Atom, and the Blue Beetle. In 1967, Giordano came over to DC for a three-year stint as editor, bringing with him many of the talents who would help shape the industry of the day, including Dennis O'Neil, Jim Aparo, and Steve Skeates. Winner of numerous industry awards, Giordano later returned to DC, rising to the position of Vice President-Executive Editor before "retiring" in 1993 to once again pursue a full-time career as penciller and inker.

DENNIS O'NEIL

Dennis O'Neil began his career as a comic-book writer in 1965 at Charlton, where then-editor Dick Giordano assigned him to several features, later bringing him to DC. At DC, O'Neil scripted several series for Giordano and Julius Schwartz and quickly became one of the most respected writers in comics. O'Neil earned a reputation for being able to "revamp" characters such as Superman, Green Lantern, Captain Marvel — and the Batman, whom O'Neil (with the help of Neal Adams and Giordano) brought back to his roots as a dark, mysterious, gothic avenger. Besides being the most important Batman writer of the 1970s, O'Neil served as an
editor at both Marvel and DC. After over a decade spent as Group Editor for the Batman title, Denny has returned full-time to his computer. In 2005 his Green Lantern novel will be published by Pocket Books.

LEN WEIN

A mainstay of the comics field, Len Wein has created dozens of characters and held numerous editorial positions at both DC and Marvel Comics. Perhaps best known as the co-creator of DC's SWAMP THING (with artist Bernie Wrightson), Wein was the editorial guiding light for the early years of Marv Wolfman and George Pérez's NEW TEEN TITANS. He was also instrumental in the genesis of CRISIS ON INFINITE EARTHS (working again with Wolfman and Pérez) and the original edition of WHO'S WHO.

"After my first taste of Mr. Adams' supreme command of superhero anatomy, hyper-realistic renderings of human facial expressions, draftsman-caliber depictions of buildings and vehicles, radical reordering of camera-angle perspective and page layout, I could never again read comic books illustrated by anyone else."
— James Rosen, *Washington Times*

"I live in a post-Neal Adams comic book world. You wouldn't have me without there having been a Neal first."
— Alex Ross, painter

"Neal was a pioneer. If I had to describe him in one word, I'd say 'genius.'"
— Joe Quesada, editor-in-chief, Marvel Comics

"Neal is probably *the* definitive Batman artist. He really revolutionized the characters — his is the way people portray Batman now."
— Andy Kubert, artist

Over the years, many artists have defined the look of one of the most iconic characters in popular culture — DC Comics' Batman.

Of all of them, perhaps the most influential is Neal Adams, who began drawing the Caped Crusader just as he was in danger of disappearing into a black hole of TV-inspired campiness and Pop Art oblivion.

Adams's art returned Batman to his urban crime roots, putting him back in the shadows and rehabilitating his image for a new generation of fans. Joining Adams in the Batman renaissance was writer Denny O'Neil, who crafted stories to match the look and feel of the Dark Knight Detective's gothic roots. Inker Dick Giordano also helped refine the look, and together the trio set a new standard for Batman comics.

Now, for the first time, all of Neal Adams's Batman work — covers and stories — is being chronologically collected. This final volume, featuring Adams's contributions from 1971 through 1996, shows the innovation and refinement that the veteran artist brought to this legendary crime-fighter. Here we meet Ra's al Ghul, the first major new Batman villain introduced during that era and featured in the 2005 feature film *Batman Begins*.

This volume features introductions by Adams and frequent collaborator Denny O'Neil.

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